


The Exodus of Baptist Pastors

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THE EXODUS OF BAPTIST PASTORS

by

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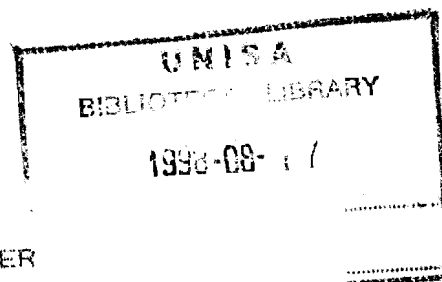
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SUMMARY

The goal of the research was to explore the ongoing problem of Baptist Pastors leaving the ministry and to attempt to discover the impact of this problem upon Baptist Churches by means of "focus group" interviews. The dissertation links the problem with a Baptist ecclesiology and seeks to understand the Baptist belief in the autonomy of the Local Church and the praxis of accreditation for pastoral ministry, plus the existence of so-called "subterranean Pastors" which has contributed toward pastoral termination.

KEY TERMS

Forced termination, pastoral disqualification, Baptist principles, autonomy, accreditation for ministry, accountability, mentoring, lay leadership, subterranean pastors, Baptist structures, Baptist leadership, Baptist church praxis.

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CHAPTER 1:

EXPLORING THE PROBLEM

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

This dissertation explores the problem of the Exodus of Baptist Pastors from pastoral ministry, which is commonly known as "pastoral termination", and the impact upon the Local Churches that make up the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. The theoretical problem is located in the field of ecclesiology, and impinges upon the identity of the congregation and the structure of its leadership, as well as the Baptist understanding of the autonomy of the local Church.

This chapter attempts to give some background to the problem of pastoral termination, both locally and with reference to the broader international Baptist picture. Inasmuch as this is a relatively new (in 1984 the first empirical studies were conducted) field of study among Baptists, little empirical work has been done on this subject outside of the United States of America.

Contributions to an understanding of the Exodus of Baptist Pastors in the literature, have largely focussed on the impact of forced termination upon the life of the Pastor himself and his family (Baldwin, 1985; Faulkner, 1986; Onley, 1994; Bird, 1996) or upon the impact of forced termination upon the Pastor as a result of moral failure like sexual immorality (Cramb, 1996; Croucher, 1997). Many of the books and articles that deal with pastoral termination fall within the category of "personal testimony" type of literature (Enroth, 1981; Marshall, 1990; Parnell, 1996). Some articles in the literature focus on a "Tips and Hints for Hurting Pastors" approach, which reflects a "clerical paradigm" of practical theology (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:7) where the focus of attention is mostly upon the Pastor as the religious professional, with little or no interest in the social context that both he and the Church find themselves in. Hardly any empirical research has been done in studying the impact of the problem of forced termination upon the local Church itself, and attempting to understand how pastoral termination affects a congregation's identity, especially in view of its leadership structures.

In the South African Baptist context, pastoral termination is a serious problem, and points to flawed praxis, which I consider to be the "hunting ground" of practical theologians. The broader global picture indicates that this is not only a local problem. In an article, Bird (1996:1) gives statistics from the United States, that every six hours a senior Pastor in a Southern Baptist Church is forcibly terminated. This of course adds another dimension to pastoral termination, namely when a pastor is "sacked" or "fired" by the Church, a more frequent practice among Southern Baptist Churches according to the 1984 and 1988 surveys they have conducted (Tharp, 1984, 1988).

In an article in the Baptist Press highlighting the problem of pastoral termination, (Smith, B. 1996:2), states that of all students who graduate from seminaries, one half are out of the ministry in ten years.

South African Baptists have far fewer graduands than the Southern Baptist Convention, (e.g. from the 1980 year group that the researcher graduated, out of twelve graduands in all, only three are still in pastoral ministry). This indicates the existence of a problem that practical theology can address.

In order to understand the background to the problem of pastoral termination, this chapter explains the researcher's paradigm as a Practical Theologian, as well as a study of the Baptist belief in the autonomy of the local Church, and how it is linked to the problem of pastoral termination.

After looking at the researcher's paradigm, the chapter then deals with how the problem of pastoral termination became an important issue, giving some statistics that support the research.

Finally the need and significance of this study are dealt with, before the research goals are clarified.

1.1.1 THE RESEARCHER'S PARADIGM AS A PRACTICAL THEOLOGIAN

Apart from my academic career at Unisa, as an undergraduate Baptist student, I was taught that practical theology was the application of the truths that systematic theology explored. This led to little theoretical reflection in the area of practical theology and a poorly developed theory. The focus of practical theological study, in line with this approach, was the Pastor, and the emphasis was on his/her need to know how to perform certain skills required by a local congregation in the Baptist denomination. This view, labelled a "clerical paradigm" (Farley, 1987), has been largely avoided in modern academic circles. The main role (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:40) of the Pastor in this paradigm is to apply the principles of Scripture to everyday life. These principles are of primary importance and the "sitz-im-leben" secondary. Today, however, the focus of practical theology has shifted from the Pastor to the Church in society, or as De Roest (1998:27) puts it, "the practice of Christian communities, organisations, movements and groups."

In practical theology, a central issue is the relationship between Scripture, theory and praxis. It is precisely here that problems arise. For centuries, practical theology was regarded as applied theology (Van der Ven, 1990:89), and with this so-called "applicationist view" praxis was regarded as subordinate as a source of knowledge. The relationship between theory and praxis is a central issue in Practical Theology, and Heyns and Pieterse (1990:40ff) seek to explain it diagrammatically in their

"Primer". Theories of the relationship between Scripture, theory and praxis attempt to do justice to all three aspects, but inevitably in any diagram, one aspect becomes more important than the other. As, for example in the operational scientific approach to the relationship between theory and praxis, where it seems from the diagram (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:42) that praxis is elevated to the same importance as Scripture. My thinking upon this matter has changed in the past two years, and I believe that there must be an ongoing dialogical relationship between Scripture, theory and the "real life" situation.

Another significant approach to practical theology is known as the "empirical" or "empirical-analytical" paradigm (Van der Ven and the Nijmegen School and Zerfass). According to De Roest (1998:22) this paradigm also has some problems in that when a problem is discovered in praxis, the analysis and explanation of the problem cannot just be restricted to an empirical diagnosis and prognosis of the situation as it exists in the present because it fails to answer the question of normativity. For the applicationist paradigm, Scripture is normative, hence this is referred to as a "Biblical hermeneutical approach" (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:40). However, this approach should be framed within a historical grammatical hermeneutic, that puts the interpretation of Scripture in the context or setting in which it was originally intended.

It is my understanding that Scripture's normative principles speak to every person in every life situation, but this does not negate the study and attempted analysis of the "sitz-im-leben", which must still be examined by other methods, i.e. empirical research. The purpose of the study of the praxis, or "sitz-im-leben" is to facilitate the better communication of biblical principles. In other words, a practical theologian cannot simply apply the gospel to any situation, without simultaneously seeking to understand the context and culture and other aspects of the social reality in which the gospel is to be presented. This requires both the use of social sciences and empirical research, and other sciences which may be of value. Thus, I find no conflict with contributions from these other sciences towards the analysis of praxis, because no reading or understanding of the Bible is without interpretation, and praxis will play a role in interpretation.

Psychology, social sciences and other scientific exercises in the service of the gospel however, have a valid but subordinate place in christian life and practice. This will lead to the criticism that in a biblical hermeneutical approach, praxis is approached with preconceived ideas. This is exactly the case, as it is not possible to approach any situation with a tabula rasa.

Today the courses offered to prospective Baptist Pastors (Vink, 1994) include such subjects as:

1. Getting an understanding of the spiritual gifts

2. Expository preaching
3. Congregational care
4. Counselling (dealing with theories of personality development)
5. Church dynamics
 - a. The nature and importance of the Church
 - b. Church meetings
 - c. Deaconate meetings

This list indicates an emphasis on the role and function of the Baptist Pastor, and fits in with the emphasis on the so-called clerical paradigm. In seminary training, a lot of attention is given to the place and role of Scripture, with extensive courses in exegesis, and the importance of Biblical languages. This enhances the view that the Pastor is the communicator of God's Truth to the people, he is a model that other can follow.

It is important in this clerical paradigm that pastoral ministry is seen as a technology, where certain skills are required, but it is equally important to understand the role of the Pastor in society. His work is more than the sum total of the tasks he carries out. The pastoral ministry is a call from God to a "life" (Hansen, 1994:10), and as a Pastor, an invitation is given to anyone to share this life. Hansen (1994:10) calls this being "a parable of Jesus".

A parable is an extended metaphor, "The parable is regarded as an extended metaphor, or the metaphor can be called an abbreviated parable. The difference consists in the fact that a parable narrates while a metaphor coalesces the narrative in a single word," (quoted in Hansen, 1994:23). A parable creates a comparison between a known thing and an unknown thing, with the objective of making the unknown, known, or at least bringing some new light or surprising discovery about that which is unknown to the attention of the hearer. The story of Jesus is a parable of God, in the sense that he came, as someone who was "known", to make God, who had hitherto been unknown, "Emmanuel", or "God with us". In a similar way, a Pastor (someone who is known) is a parable of Jesus (someone who is unknown). His task or role is to make Jesus known, and to demonstrate a Christlike life for others to follow.

A Pastor's invitation to people is to enter the life that God offers, which he or she lives as an example for others to follow. Firet (1986:14) too speaks about this in terms of "pastoral role fulfilment". Firet (1986:15) says that "a person acts, not on his own, not by virtue of his own superiority . . . but in the name of the Lord of the Church, and with the Word of God" and further, "the unique and essential element in pastoral role fulfilment lies in being sent by specific mandate of the Lord, who wishes to make an appearance himself in the role fulfilment of the Pastor".

This has serious ramifications for this study, because if, as I have argued, the Pastor is a parable of Jesus, and occupies an important role in society, the issue of his/her termination from pastoral ministry, whether forced or voluntary is an important subject, no matter what paradigm one chooses, but more so for those who subscribe to a "clerical paradigm".

In the literature, attention is given to what seems like an evolving of practical theology as a science in its own right. Van der Ven (1993:34) in addressing the history of practical theology, speaks about three "orientations" in the history of the development of the subject.

1. Practical theology having to do with the clergy
2. Practical theology having to do with the Church, but involving the clergy
3. Practical theology having to do with the relationship between church and society, but involving the Church and the clergy.

Van der Ven's structure does not limit practical theology to the study of the Church. He takes "practical theology out of the ecclesiological framework" (Van der Ven, 1993:38), and he puts it more within the realm of the social sciences, in spite of the fact that he stresses a **theological-empirical** approach. Van der Ven's fundamental flaw, from my conservative Baptist perspective, is his emphasis on natural theology, where truths about God can be learned just as much from created things by reason alone, as well as from revealed truth. On the other hand, Ballard (1995:114) points out the practical nature of practical theology:

"To affirm that practical theology is a practical discipline is to suggest that it is closer to social work or education than the more theoretical disciplines . . ."

In reflecting upon Ballard's article, it seems to be more of a polemic or "raison d'etre" for practical theology, as a science in its own right, rather than the way theology is fed into practice, which seems to be the focus of an applicationist approach.

In Baptist teaching, emphasis is put, among other things, on the principle of the priesthood of all believers, no distinction between clergy and laity is made. In this regard, practical theology essentially has to do with people, and their efforts to communicate the gospel effectively and efficiently. In order to achieve this goal, methods and techniques are important. In the late 1970's the focus on the Pastor's role in Baptist Churches was that he was "to be the theologian for the congregation" (lectures in systematic theology). This somewhat paternalistic view of the role of the Pastor however is not shared by many members of Baptist Churches. However it still remains a significant characteristic of Baptist preaching for the Pastor as preacher to clarify how the listeners

should apply their text from theory to praxis. But thankfully today, it is not only the Pastor who is the focus of practical theology activity, in the same way as it is not only the Pastor who has the sole responsibility of communicating the gospel, but every member of the Body of Christ (the Church).

Furthermore, not all the skills which are needed to communicate the gospel effectively in the world are found in every individual, e.g. in Ephesians 4:11-13, we read that:

*"he gave **some** to be prophets, **some** to be evangelists, and **some** to be pastors and teachers, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith . . ."* (emphasis mine).

The applicationist approach to practical theology, therefore stresses the emphasis upon truths that are found in Scripture, and considered to be unassailable, which mandate the praxis of all Christians.

This, of course, indicates a deductive process of theory formation (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:24), where the practical theologian would proceed from the general to the particular. For example, in Matthew 28, we have what is known as The Great Commission, the command for all time for disciples of Christ to make other disciples. By way of theory formation through deductive thinking, a Pastor will give specific instructions to his congregation for reaching a certain suburb in their community to concretise that commission. The following Saturday, the Church walks from door to door giving out invitations to the Church. But in their minds, they are not just giving out pamphlets, they know they are fulfilling the Great Commission.

I believe it true that in a Baptist practical theology, to be classified a "good preacher" is synonymous with being a "good Pastor", (similar to Barth's "good doctrine = good preaching") and many students and Pastors in Churches spend their time studying and developing the preaching aspect of pastoral ministry. But as I have argued earlier, a Pastor is more than the sum of the tasks he performs.

My understanding of practical theology has changed over the last years, leading me to believe that it is not merely the application of the great truths of systematic theology, but that it is a science in its own right, concerned with the study of people's communicative actions in the service of the gospel (Firet 1987:260). However, I find no difficulty in the use of empirical studies and the hermeneutic of situations to contribute to a better understanding of how the gospel can be communicated more effectively, but I would never elevate the praxis to the same level as Scripture.

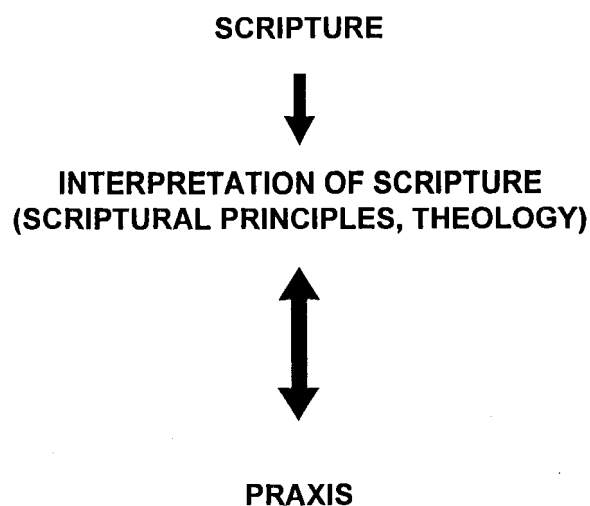
I have no reasoned, clear cut answer to the problem of reconciling the biblical hermeneutic approach with empirical studies, which I am now engaged in. I have concluded that there must be a

dialogical relationship between all the facets of practical theology, which includes the historical grammatical exegesis of Scripture, the development of sound theological theory and the hermeneutic of the life situation

The relationship between theory and praxis is a central issue in the field of practical theology, and in a "biblical hermeneutic view" (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:40), the relationship is seen as a one way traffic from theory to praxis. This is open to criticism, because it does not take into account the ongoing dialogical nature of the relationship, however, I believe it to be true to say that Baptists generally in South Africa have sought to adhere to it. (This is my considered opinion upon the matter, but it might serve to be the subject of further empirical studies!). A lot of discussion has happened recently at national and associational level on the role of Scripture in the life and practice of Baptists. Especially with the influence of charismatic tradition and their focus on the prophetic gifts in Churches.

A simple diagram can illustrate the Biblical hermeneutic paradigm.

DIAGRAM 1: Paradigm of the relationship between Scripture and Praxis



Certain inferences can be made from the above diagram. I have tried to illustrate a one-way traffic from Scripture to the principles inferred from Scripture, but a two way traffic between our understanding and interpretation of Scripture and the praxis. The fact that this is an ongoing dialogical relationship might indicate that this is not a true biblical hermeneutical approach, but rather more of an operational scientific view, or at least a marriage of the two .

A further limitation of this diagram is that it does not indicate the time factor necessary to illustrate the ongoing dialogue between principle and praxis which Heyns and Pieterse (1990:42) does by means of a spiral diagram.

1.1.2 HOW PASTORAL TERMINATION BECAME AN IMPORTANT ISSUE

I was drawn to the problem of men leaving the ministry through four converging streams of influence:

- a. A crisis in my own pastoral experience in the early 1990's which forced me to engage in bi-vocational ministry, and the advice and assistance my wife and I received during that traumatic period.
- b. Hearing the continual complaining by pastoral colleagues of the treatment they received at the hands of those in denominational authority when faced with a crisis in their church or life.
- c. A study of the literature relating to "forced termination" and "pastoral disqualification" especially among Southern Baptists in the U.S.A.
- d. The evidence of numbers of men whose names are removed from ministerial lists at every annual Baptist Assembly, some of which were the result of moral failure.

The problem of pastoral termination and forced pastoral termination, for example, through moral failure are such serious issues that they demand to be addressed at an academic level. These problems are symptomatic of both the pressures of the day and age in which we live and the need to address the subject of the role of the Pastor, including not only the praxis, but also the personal spiritual life that he/she leads. A more communicative rather than a strategic approach to praxis will enable the Pastor to adjust aspects of his ministry and personality perceived to be flawed.

In a small denomination, the crises and challenges facing Baptist denominational leadership at this time are great that I believe we need to have men and women who fit the profile spelled out in 1 Chronicles 12:32, namely:

"Men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do - "

It is my understanding that some men and women are called by God for a time into pastoral office, then move back into a secular environment to support the Church and use their gifts from another perspective. This perspective I now share with other colleagues. As someone, in personal correspondence put it (P1.27.4.98).

"I cannot see why the pastorate has to be lifelong bondage! Why can't a person serve for 10 or 15 years and then change direction in life and support ministry from a different angle?"

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa, historically has offered only one main avenue for those called into ministry, and that is Pastoral work in a Church context, but again times are changing and today, many other options are open for a person called into "full-time service".

1.1.2.1 NOMENCLATURE IN THE TITLE OF THE DISSERTATION

In the title of the dissertation, "The Exodus of Baptist Pastors", I want to point out that there is a problem, if only by association with the term "Exodus".

First of all, the word "Exodus" might imply for some, that there are large numbers of people leaving Baptist ministry, which is not the case, and secondly, the term "Exodus" as used in the Scriptures was more of a redemptive event in the life of the people of God, leading the people out of bondage in Egypt, and I am not sure if the term "bondage" should be too freely associated with the concept of pastoral ministry, which is seen more as a calling by God, rather than bondage. However, in the non-biblical sense that it means a departure from something or somewhere, I use it as the title of the dissertation.

1.1.3 THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF PASTORAL TERMINATION

In attempting to describe the problem of pastoral termination in a general way, it is important to note how a researcher formulates the problem that requires, in this case empirical study. Dreyer (1992:371) says "the aim of research is to solve problems . . . that warrant research." In this study the question of men leaving pastoral ministry was the basic research problem, which gave itself to empirical investigation by the application of empirical research methods. Dreyer maintains that in qualitative, as opposed to quantitative research, the problem is less carefully elaborated, because of the "open ended approach" to the research, and this has proved to be the case with this study, as the researcher has gone back to the research problem and reformulated it on many occasions.

Van der Ven (1990:157) says that in the phases of his empirical theological cycle, the phase of developing the theological problem and the goal consists of two sub-phases:

- a. The development of the problem
- b. The development of the goal

In seeking to develop the theological problem of theodicy, which is the subject of the example of empirical research he has undertaken, he arrives at the problem by "certain experiences which we encountered in pastoral praxis" (1990:157). Mason on the other hand forces the researcher into more intellectual effort in understanding the essence of any enquiry (Mason, 1996:11) and points out that

in the planning and designing phase of research, it is not merely the identification of a topic, but it involves a persons "ontological" position or how the researcher sees the nature and essence of things in the social world. Mason (1990:11ff) asks five important questions of the research:

- a. What is the nature of the phenomena or entities, or social "reality" which I wish to investigate?
- b. What might represent knowledge or evidence of the entities or social "reality" which I wish to investigate?
- c. What topic, or broad substantive area, is the research concerned with?
- d. What is the intellectual puzzle? What do I wish to explain? What are my research questions?
- e. What is the purpose of my research? What am I doing it for?

Du Plooy (Dreyer, 1992:373), identifies two processes in the formulation of a problem, namely:

- a. Formulation of the problem involving a growing awareness and identification of the problem.
- b. Interpretation of the problem through a creative process, where the problem is broken up into various sub-problems.

Arriving at the subject of this study was a long process, over a period of five years, beginning with a personal perspective on the ministry as a "lifetime" calling to an "esoteric existence" in both belief and action. However, this understanding was incongruent with what was happening in practice. It became obvious through the years of pastoral ministry that more and more men and women were leaving pastoral ministry to enter secular employment. Opportunities arose to interview individuals who had experienced the trauma of pastoral termination and forced termination, and the vague problem of the exodus of pastors became an "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 1990:14).

However, this is not merely an intellectual problem concerning the researcher's view of reality, neither is it just a social phenomenon worth investigating. The research addresses the structure and identity of the Church.

As a reflective practitioner, over a period of 5 years, it became clear to me that various factors contributed to the problem of the exodus of Baptist Pastors. And I began to develop a systemic view of the problem.

There are different parts of the community that are affected by the problem of forced

termination of a Pastor. It is not merely a labour dispute resulting in an amicable parting. The Church is not only the employer, but also the "family" from which the Pastor and his family might be expelled. In theory, this is perceived by the researcher to be like a "death" in a family. It is therefore important that the impact of what may be perceived as a death in the family may have upon such a family.

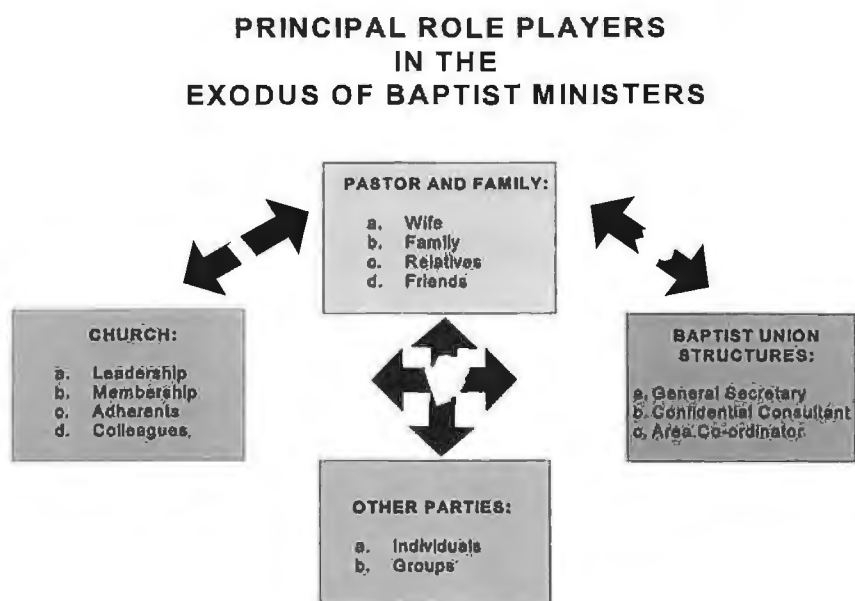
The Pastor on the other hand is not merely the employee, who might be hired or fired at will. He is a "parable of Jesus" (Hansen, 1994:24) He is the "mystagogue" (Van der Ven, 1990:158) or inner path director. He directs or steers the Church towards its God-given tasks, and encourages believers to develop and use their gifts in Godly service. He has an important role to play in the community within which he serves as well.

In a clerical paradigm of practical theology, with the emphasis on the position and the role of the Pastor, it is important to note that pastoral praxis is under close scrutiny. However in the identification of the sub-problems related to the role of the Pastor in the research, it was discovered that Baptist Pastors, in the Churches that formed the population in the study, have a flawed understanding of the concept of accountability, which I believe may be related to a misunderstanding of the Baptist concept of the autonomy of the local Church.

The Church is a part of the society within which it operates, and to which it witnesses, and ministers the grace of God, it is affected and affects the reality around it. But this is only one aspect or mode of its existence. It is also part of a denomination, which does not contain **all** the members of society, but only **part** of them, and as such is accountable to them. The issue therefore of "accountability" will be one that will be explored in this work. The termination of Pastors affects the pastoral family, the Baptist "family" and the community of faith as a whole. Baptist Pastors themselves, though not formally united with a "union" have a sense of belonging, be it even diluted, and a sense of collective identity. The termination of a member of this collective identity, I have discovered from personal discussion with Pastors, affects the whole group.

Pastors engaged in personal conversation have spoken about their feelings of "frustration" and "disillusionment" with the ministry when they reflect on the termination of a colleague. Some have expressed a fear that if pastoral termination was happening to others, would it not merely be a matter of time until they too became just a statistic. In trying to reflect on this aspect, I have concluded that there is an aspect of pastoral ministry which focuses on the care for the Body of Christ, and in the sense that other Pastors are also members of that Body, the need to reach out to hurting Pastors and to try to understand their problems, is a basic issue of sensitivity for some.

DIAGRAM 2: A Systemic View of the Problem of Pastoral Termination



The above diagram gives a simple “systemic” view of a very complex problem, and how **people** and relationships are involved. There are a number of possible scenarios that are presented in this diagram:

- a. The relationship between the Pastor and the local Church is broken. This is more than just an issue between the leader of the congregation. It involves the same dynamics as a “family dispute”.
- b. There is often a fracture in the relationship between the Pastor and the denomination. The latter is often perceived to have not been helpful in assisting to solve the problems that have existed in the Local Church, or to have a “hidden agenda”.
- c. In some instances there was a fracture in the relationship between a local Church and the denomination, when the former wanted to resign, and cease to be a Baptist Church.
- d. Some cases of forced termination involved moral issues such as sexual misconduct. These invariably found their way into the homes of the people, not in the Church but who live in the community. These stories discredit the name of the Lord and the local Church as well as the Pastor.

Smith, N. (1994:3), points out that some terminations are inevitable, and some justifiable, but most are preventable, he writes in the article that pastoral termination can be the result of a number of different factors:

A Spiritual Factor

Baptists feel strongly about the "call" of God upon a person's life, whether for Pastoral service or mission work or some other avenue of para-Church service. This can be verified by the large number of Baptist people employed in these organisations. However, there can be no argument that the tenure of this "call" is for life. From a biblical perspective, Queen Esther came to the kingdom for a specific time to solve a specific problem. Charismatic leaders in the time of Judges were called by God for specific times and specific tasks. It can be equally true therefore that the "call" of God for Pastoral service might be for a period in a person's life (e.g. for retirement, or until a person marries). To terminate one's ministry therefore is quite natural.

The other side of this spiritual aspect is the need by Pastors to develop a devotional life that keeps them in touch with God. Pastors need to be nurtured in their worship (Smith, 1994) and to be an example of God's love to their congregation. If a Pastor fails to have a regular quiet time and develop a healthy devotional life, if nothing else, he will certainly lose the joy that is associated with ministry.

There is a growing awareness of the need that Christians have for a spiritual director or mentor. Some popular authors who focus on this aspect of the Christian life include Henri Nouwen (1981), Richard Foster (1992) and Eugene Peterson (1989). Van der Ven (1993:158) has the same idea in mind when he refers to what he calls a "mystagogue" - an inner life director. I believe that this relates the matter of accountability in the life of a Pastor, where it is not only in a Pastors "performance of duties" that he/she is accountable, but also for their spiritual walk with God.

Moral failure

Moral failure is becoming more common, (Baptist Union Handbooks for the period of the study indicate the number of people that were removed from the list of fully accredited ministers because of moral problems) as a factor causing pastoral termination. Issues relating to sex including extra-marital affairs, the abuse of money, significant paradigm shifts with relation to congregational authority and leadership style have contributed to this factor in pastoral termination. Appendix 1 relates to one of these factors, purely as an example.

When a Pastor's name is removed from the ministerial lists of the Baptist Union, a brief account of the reason for the removal is given at the annual Assembly. More regularly, in the last 16 years, the reasons given have related to issues of morality.

Financial failure on the part of the Church

Some of the smaller churches are in dire financial straits, and struggle to pay a Pastor a reasonable stipend, often forcing him into bi-vocational ministry ("tent making"). However they place the same requirements upon their Pastor as if he were employed full-time.

Authority factor

This is a very important reason for pastoral termination, and will be dealt with more fully in 2.2.2. Authority structures are necessary, and a Pastor's regard for these structures will encourage unity in the denomination. However, it has been true in the past that when a person is accredited and becomes the Pastor of a Church, he might have a paradigm shift in his understanding of "congregational Church authority" or "the authority of Scripture".

If this is the case, that if a Pastor's paradigm shifts significantly, he should take the correct action and resign, and ask the Church to consider "re-calling" him because the conditions under which he was first called have changed. However, there is an existing situation where the Pastor would have abused his authority by attempting to change the Church's understanding to fall into line with his own, even if it means that the Church might dilute its Baptist principles.

Churches too ignore their own constitutional guidelines, and there is one case where the church's constitution clearly states that their Pastor has to be an approved minister of the Baptist Union, knowing this to be the case, they have still called a man to be their Pastor who has been turned down by the Baptist Union for ministerial recognition, in so doing violating their constitution. And from their part, the denomination has at this point not taken any observable action to take the Church to task. It is sensitive situations like this which point to flawed praxis.

Temperament factor

There are people who are basically unstable or have personality disorders, who are really unsuited for pastoral ministry because of temperament, but who manage to find

their way into pastoral positions, mostly, in my observation in smaller churches. In interviews with two denominational employees, they pointed out separately that any flaw in a person's personality will be exacerbated in Pastoral ministry with the pressures that they endure, and that temperament, in their opinion was a key factor to staying in pastoral ministry.

Other reasons

Based on overseas research, (BSSB Survey, 1988) which I have dealt with in 1.1.3.1.1.2 other reasons for termination, both on the part of the Pastor and the Church include:

- Poor communication skills
- Issues relating to morality
- Issues relating to performance
- Leadership style
- Issues relating to power
- Personality conflicts
- Leadership conflicts
- Incompetency and insufficient training
- Shift in doctrine
- A "mismatch" between the Pastor and the Church
- Family problems
- Length of tenure

The research was done exposing the problems from the point of view of the Pastor, but nothing was done in exposing the problems in Churches which have historically had problems with terminating their Pastors. Autonomy of the local Church does not exclude a degree of accountability, and Churches too need to be brought to account for their actions. This research is the first of which I am aware which explores the problem from the point of view of the local Church.

There are dynamics which draw a Pastor **AWAY** from the ministry and other dynamics which draw him further **INTO** the ministry. An example of the forces of "exeat" (Latin for "he may go") would include the success story of another Pastor who might have moved to another country to Pastor a Church. The lure of "greener pastures" and the escape from the downward spiral of violence, are all factors which are drawing families away from pastoral ministry here in South Africa.

Croucher's (1997:2) theory is that there are 2 main reasons that pastoral termination in Australia occurs. One is the issue of "self", which includes a loss of self-confidence, the inability to

cope, and the other factor is “health” which is associated with stress, burnout or depression in the ministry. Conflict and other problems only compound these fundamental reasons.

ILLUSTRATION 1: Forces operating upon the life of a Pastor



Logically therefore, for men who leave Baptist ministry, the forces and dynamics causing him to decide to **leave** his employment, are greater than the forces and dynamics which are **holding** him in that position. Staying in the ministry, and remaining at a Church for a significant period of time to enjoy a meaningful ministry and making an impact upon a group and a community is surely desirable for a man or woman who have given their lives or at least part of them to Pastoral Ministry (1.1.2.2).

The duration of a person's ministry in a Church is a good indicator of not only his stability, but it indicates the security the church feels with the Pastor's ministry also. It is an indicator that they are able to work through the inevitable problems that arise equitably, and that the relationship develops like a marriage.

1.1.3.1 STATISTICS OF PASTORAL TERMINATION

It is important to note the extent of the problem of pastoral termination as expressed in statistics that have been made available from different countries where Baptists have larger followings, namely the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.

In selecting areas around the world where the problem of pastoral termination might be explored, consideration was given to the groupings of Baptists in different geographical areas, and to the availability of Internet in these places. The study was hampered by a number of problems. Most notably there was a lethargy in replying to numerous correspondences through the medium of the Internet. Furthermore, there are relatively few people that are concerned about this problem, and those that are concerned, seem to be totally preoccupied with the situation in their own country. The

distance factor played an important role in receiving information, and the fact that South African Baptists are a relatively small group in number. However, once initial contact was made through the Internet, further connections were made with people who were either involved with pastoral termination, or who were studying the problem in their own country.

1.1.3.1.1 FORCED TERMINATION IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Southern Baptist Convention, through its Sunday School Board, has sought to address the issue of **forced** termination, mainly from the point of view of attempting to rehabilitate pastors who, for various reasons have been fired. In pursuing this direction, they have put a number of programmes into operation, in Texas, Louisiana and North and South Carolina.

In 1983 at the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, a resolution was passed commending the Sunday School Board, State Conventions and Associations for their efforts related to the crises regarding pastoral terminations (Smith, N. 1990:6). Five years later the crisis had not subsided, and a national concern was established. A number of studies were commissioned by the S.B.C. to highlight the problem and focus the attention of the denomination on it.

1.1.3.1.1.1 RESULTS OF 1984 STUDY

This study, conducted by the Research Department of the Sunday School Board, indicated that 88 Pastors had been terminated each month in Churches in the Convention. Two primary causes revolved around the disunity of the congregation and the level of interpersonal skills of the Pastor. It was found that Pastors were being terminated by small but powerful minorities that controlled the decision-making processes in the Church. Tharp (1984:139) discovered in this survey that 78% of Churches that had terminated their Pastor had a previous history of doing so, and that the termination was usually preceded by what he calls "early warning signs" (1990:139). These are:

- a. Withdrawal of certain members from one another and from the Pastor.
- b. Complaints from members and staff concerning anything in the Church.
- c. Adamant stands taken by groups in the Church or the Pastor himself.

Tharp discovered that 60% of the Churches which had previously terminated their Pastor failed to divulge this information to subsequent Pastors, and a large percentage of the remainder only gave partial information.

During the 1950's, Tharp found that the supply of Pastors was far below the needs of the

growing Southern Baptist Convention. The figure being around 0,8 Pastors per Church. However, in 1976, the ratio was 1,6, and the estimated ratio for the present day was 2,6 pastors available for each Church. Theoretically, says Tharp (1990:140) in the earlier days, a Church might be more tolerant of its Pastor, and willing to "work out" their differences in an equitable way.

Today Pastors are no longer scarce. In a parallel research experiment for this thesis, I applied for a post in a Church in the USA advertised on the Internet, and found that I was one of 175 applicants for the position of Senior Pastor!

1.1.3.1.1.2 RESULTS OF 1988 STUDY

This was a random survey of 220 "Directors" (Area Co-ordinators) in 40 Conventions, based solely on forced terminations over an 18 month period. It took place 4 years after the 1984 survey.

It was discovered that the number of terminations over this period was 2100. This equates to approximately 116 per month, or one every 6 hours! This indicates an increase of 28 per month from the 1984 survey. According to this survey, termination was caused by the following:

TABLE 1: Reasons for Termination in 1988 Study in the USA

No	Percentage	Cause	No	Percentage	Cause
1	13,4	Lack of communication	7	5,9	Lack of Leadership
2	12,9	Moral issue	8	5,9	Incompetency
3	12,4	Performance problems	9	5,4	Doctrinal shift
4	11,4	Style of Leadership	10	5,4	Mismatch
5	10,9	Power struggles	11	3,5	Family Problems
6	9,9	Personality conflicts	12	3,0	Length of tenure

From the above table it can be seen that the causes of termination can be initiated by either the Pastor or the congregation. Firstly, from the point of view of the Pastor, the causes of termination range from personal incompetence (8) to the perceived inability to provide appropriate leadership (10). The matter of tenure, according to Bullard's article in Search Magazine (1990:11) is an important issue relating to forced termination. He states that "if a Pastor fails to gain the support of church leaders within a few years, termination can occur". In Speed Leas' study (1980:7) of involuntary terminations in 1980, he concluded that two thirds of the terminations occurred within the first five years of the pastorate. Secondly, from the point of view of the congregation. Bullard (1990:10) says that the problems of termination can already exist in a congregation before a new Pastor arrives,

especially where unclear role expectations exist. Power struggles and a lack of congregational unity are further issues initiated by the congregation. Other factors include such things as "spiritual stagnation" and blaming the Pastor for the problem, and a lack of clear vision, and definition of purpose.

However, there are certainly causes of termination that must be shared by both the Pastor and the congregation, arising from the table above. For example, the inability to deal with conflict cannot be blamed on one party alone. Secondly, as the dynamics of Church life change, perhaps the structure of the society within which the church operates changes. Both the Pastor and the congregation need to change with the changing demands of that society.

1.1.3.1.1.3 RESULTS OF LATEST RESEARCH

In January, 1998, letters were again sent out by the S.B.C. to Directors of Missions requesting information for studies into the phenomena of "forced termination". Although the full extent and analysis of this study has not been completed, the bare facts are that during 1996, 1089 Pastors were terminated, amounting to 91 per month. In this survey, Smith (Information supplied by personal correspondence) and his team at the Sunday School Board discovered that the 5 main issues for termination in 1996 were:

- a. Control issues: "Who is going to run the Church?"
- b. Poor people skills on the part of the Pastor
- c. The Church's resistance to change
- d. The Pastor's leadership style was too strong
- e. The Church was already conflicted when the Pastor arrived

1.1.3.1.2 THE AUSTRALIAN BAPTISTS

Correspondence via the Internet led to dialogue between the researcher and Dr Geoff Cramb, currently residing in Queensland, and Dr. Rowland Croucher of John Mark Ministries. In his short article Croucher (1997:1) focuses attention on the "fun" or "joy" element that he believes is lacking in the pastoral ministry.

In an article on the Internet, he refers to a survey of over 243 Pastors where over half the respondents declared that they had lost this sense of joy.

Croucher (1998:1) comments that:

"Conflict with local Church leaders (lay and other Pastors) is mentioned as one of the

most significant factors in the actual decision to leave, by one quarter of all respondents."

This comment I believe ties in with what Faulkner (1986:21) calls the existence of "subterranean Pastors" in local Churches. This being the case, I would argue for pastoral termination, and more specifically forced termination to be more of a global Baptist phenomena than I originally suspected. In 2.2.2 dealing with the issue of subterranean Pastors I refer to some of the conclusions that Croucher came to on this matter.

Hooker, A. (quoted in Cramb, 1996:80), in an unpublished handwritten research manuscript, records why men are leaving the ministry in Australia, says that there are about 10 000 Pastors in that country, comprising of all denominations, and about the same number of people who have left pastoral ministry. Hooker discovered that among Baptists in the time frame 1956 - 1985, 49,8% withdrew from ministry for a variety of reasons. From 1986 - 1995, a further 39,2% withdrew. These statistics, I am led to believe are available from the Baptist Union of Queensland, in a report entitled "Exhaustive report on ministry record of pastors, in the Baptist Union of Queensland 1956-1985".

Cramb (1996:80) records that in 12 months, 25 Australian Pastors have terminated, and from this number 40% for reasons of conflict that was unresolved. Stress, breakdown, ethical and moral misconduct accounts for a further 24%.

Croucher (1997:1) says that the most significant reason for leaving the ministry was conflict, either with colleagues, lay leaders, members of the congregation or denomination. Conflict with lay leaders accounted for 25% of all terminations.

1.1.3.1.3 THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

After conversation with the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Dr. David Coffey, it was discovered that a research project is being undertaken concerning "An Examination of Free Church Ministry, 1946-1995" by Rev Nigel Coles (NC.15.11.98) In this unfinished study, of the 2738 pastors who had been enrolled on the accredited list of Baptist ministers for the period under examination, approximately 50% had not retired remaining on that list. Significantly 758 resigned or were "deleted". Coles (NC.15.11.98) says that "Marriage (its breakdown) features significantly. Conflict with other local Church leaders and others within the congregation also is prominent. Stress or health issues are a notable feature". The statistics (available for scrutiny from the Baptist Union of Great Britain) point to a decline in the number of Churches, the number of members and the number of baptisms, during this 50 year period, but in the last 23 years show an increase of the number of

Pastors per capita. This enforces what other studies have shown; that there are more Pastors available for less Churches.

1.1.3.1.4 THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Statistics regarding pastoral termination are presented in the annual report of the executive of the Baptist Union to the national assembly, where representatives from all Churches meet together. These figures are presented in the Handbook of the Baptist Union, published annually by the Baptist Publishing House. By obtaining these Handbooks for the period over which this study was taken it was possible to discover the extent of the problem of pastoral termination in South Africa.

Since 1982, according to the Baptist Union Handbooks, 76 men have left the pastoral ministry of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa to enter secular business. The statistics are as follows:

TABLE 2: The number of men leaving Baptist pastoral ministry for business

YEAR	NUMBER OF PASTORS LEAVING THE MINISTRY	YEAR	NUMBER OF PASTORS LEAVING THE MINISTRY
1982-3	14	1990-1	2
1983-4	2	1991-2	6
1984-5	3	1992-3	7
1985-6	1	1993-4	7
1986-7	2	1994-5	5
1987-8	2	1995-6	7
1988-9	3	1996-7	6
1989-90	4	1997-8	5

These figures are by no means the end of the story, nor do they in fact reflect the full extent of the picture of men and women who have left the pastoral ministry for any number of reasons other than to go to business, which the chart above indicates.

Apart from those who have left the pastoral ministry for retirement, statistics in Table 3 also indicate that there are those who have left Churches:

1. To study further (either locally or overseas)
2. To engage in para-church ministries
3. To enter the mission field
4. To start independent ministries

5. To work for the Defence Force Chaplaincy or S.A.B.C.
6. To emigrate from South Africa

In a denomination the size of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (approximately 500 local Churches) the loss, through pastoral termination and forced termination over a period of time, of the numbers of qualified men and women cannot be underestimated. The trauma in the local Church, and the shift of focus from its own goals and dreams which may occur at termination may take years to rectify, as it tries to work out what went wrong.

The feeling of frustration and discouragement by other Pastors, even those who had been in ministry for a long period of time came out strongly in personal conversation. The research will clearly show that the extent of the impact of pastoral termination was far reaching and periods of five and seven years were mentioned in the research, and still the Church had not recovered.

The problem of pastoral care to Pastors must be addressed, and possibly Churches who have gained a reputation for terminating their Pastors must be taken to task, as well as those men who leave the ministry for business too quickly when serious problems occur, to re-appear later looking for a call to a Church. This concept of accountability is one that I will seek to explore in the course of this work.

Individual Pastors have expressed little confidence in the skill of denominational leadership in resolving issues which might cause a Pastor to leave, and the general feeling on the part of Pastors that the Baptist Union is more interested in the Church than they are in the Pastors, are all issues which are relevant to this matter, and have emerged in private conversation and require other empirical research of an exploratory nature.

Many tangent issues related to ministry and ministers were raised during the interviews, but because this is a dissertation of limited scope, it was not possible to deal with them.

The fuller picture regarding pastoral terminations, including those who have been forcibly terminated from their position as a Pastor of a local congregation, and those who have terminated pastoral ministry for the reasons outlined above, obtained from the Baptist Union Handbooks, is as follows:

TABLE 3: The more detailed picture of how many Pastors have left the Baptist ministry since 1982

YEAR	TOTAL number of men leaving the ministry	Overseas	YEAR	TOTAL number of men leaving the ministry	Overseas
1982-3	23	4	1990-1	8	0
1983-4	8	1	1991-2	10	1
1984-5	7	1	1992-3	14	0
1985-6	12	6	1993-4	17	3
1986-7	12	7	1994-5	16	2
1987-8	10	1	1995-6	20	4
1988-9	11	0	1996-7	9	1
1989-90	12	3	1997-8	14	3

These figures show that a total of 203 Pastors left pastoral ministry over a 16 year period, with 37 of these emigrating overseas.

In order to understand the larger picture of the number of people that have actually left the ministry over the period of this study, I have included those who, for the six reasons listed on page 8, have also left the Baptist pastoral ministry. In other words the criteria for inclusion was that these men were fully accredited ministers of the Baptist Union, in a pastoral role in a local church before their move.

I have also indicated how many contained in that figure left South Africa for overseas during this period, as this might indicate the extent of the "brain-drain" from South Africa has affected the Baptist Union.

Similar studies in the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States, the Australian Baptist Union, The New Zealand Baptist Union and the Baptist Union of Great Britain also point to an increase in the problem of pastoral termination, often through conflict, and entering the secular business world.

Finally, it will be helpful to note **from what geographical areas** in South Africa, Pastors have left the ministry, as this gives motivation from **where** the research will be conducted.

TABLE 4: The total numbers of Pastors who have left pastoral ministry since 1982, and the area where they served

Association	Number of men who have left the ministry	Association	Number of men who have left the ministry
Border Association	5	Transvaal Association	30
Central Association	3	Western Prov. Association	12
Eastern Prov. Association	3	Denomination/Association	5
Natal Association	14	Other	4

It is for this reason that the area once known at the "SouthernTransvaal" region, but now part of Gauteng, and the Kwa Zulu Natal area would be the places where the research would be conducted.

The reasoning is further supported by the fact that the researcher personally served in the Gauteng area for 8 years and is presently living in Kwa-Zulu Natal, thus limiting the financial implications of the research as much as possible.

Although statistics regarding the exodus of Baptist Pastors are available, an issue of credibility arises with the statistics pertaining to their presentation in the Baptist Union Handbooks, the official document of the Baptist Union, not the least of which is their reliability and accuracy for the period 1982 until present, the time frame of the study. The reason for the inclusion of this information is to underscore the thoroughness of the research that was undertaken.

On two occasions people's names were repeated as having left the ministry on two consecutive years. Either this is a typographical error, or the lists of those people leaving the ministry were never meant to be accurate sources of information for researchers.

Other questions arose pertaining to Pastors who never resigned from a church but who transferred from one Church to another during the period of investigation. The question arose whether it was possible that at least a number of these Pastors would have terminated, (unless they had been called to another Church), by the Local Church anyway? In other words, were they at the point of either being terminated by the Church or resigning of their own accord from the ministry? The answer to that question was "Yes" when a member of the Ministerial Settlements Committee (a committee that assists Pastors and Churches in filling vacant positions) was interviewed.

The Baptist Union Handbook, being the sole source of information regarding the number of

men leaving the ministry, leaves no option but to introduce these statistics, with the caution, that the actual figures probably represent a worse picture.

1.1.3.2 LENGTH OF TENURE

The term "tenure" is used in Baptist circles to speak of the period of time a person is employed usually in a pastoral position by a local church.

In an address to the Southern Baptist Convention (Draper, 1996:1) then President, James T Draper Jr. said, "We are a Convention of discouraged ministers". Rev George Harris (Harris, 1996:1) of Castle Hills congregation states that "over 1000 preachers a week across the USA, from all denominations are leaving the ministry". Statistics show that the length of tenure in the 1990's is decreasing as a direct result of the increasing number of pastoral terminations, especially forced termination.

Recent figures in the Southern Baptist Convention state that over 200 ministers are leaving the pastorate for secular employment every month. In the 1988 survey, Table 1, length of tenure was one of the top 12 reasons given for pastoral termination in the USA. In conversation with members of Baptist Churches, it has been mentioned to me on a number of occasions that the Pastor "has been there too long".

Length of tenure is an issue which I believe indicates the health of the so-called "marriage" between the Pastor and the congregation. However, aside from the aspect of a Pastor's "calling" to a Church, there are other factors which can influence the length of a pastor's tenure in a Church, e.g. a more mobile population and urbanisation, the desire for advancement to a larger Church, opportunities to study further, opportunities for a more comfortable life-style.

Every year at the annual assembly of Baptists in Southern Africa, names are removed from the list of fully accredited Pastors. Although the length of tenure is not the issue under scrutiny in the research, it indicates an interesting sub-problem.

The average tenure of ministry by a Pastor in a Baptist Church was determined by adding the length of tenure of each ministry of each Pastor, adding them together and then dividing them by the total number of Pastors to determine the average. The statistics are as follows:

TABLE 5: Tenure in Baptist Churches in South Africa, Australia and the USA

Baptist Union of Southern Africa	5 years 2 months
Baptist Union of Australia	3 to 4 years
Southern Baptist Convention, USA	9 months

Covey (1992:79) has 2 principles which both relate to the passing of time in the accomplishment of goals, they are what he calls the "laws of the farm" and the "six days of creation". These laws or principles concern the natural sequence of development and progress, even in pastoral ministry, in the same sense that there is a natural sequence of events in creation, or in planting and harvesting a crop. On the basis of Covey's popular work, a strong argument could be built for longer tenures, as it requires a period of time to elapse to build relationships between people, and from that to build an effective ministry. The issue here is that the research deals with pastoral termination, and some of these terminations occur after short tenures (less than the average time). In personal conversation with Pastors who have been terminated forcibly, some have expressed the opinion that they felt that they had hardly begun their ministry, and still had a lot to offer the churches which they had pastored. But the problems became too great, and the conflict too much, hence the termination.

Fortunately, here in South Africa the figures represent a more healthy situation, with the average tenure among ministers whose names are in the 1998 Handbook (1998:121ff) is approximately 5 years 2 months. This could be caused by the relatively small number of Baptist Churches in South Africa, and the feeling that once a Pastor was called to one of these, unless he has a firm "call" from somewhere else, he had better make every effort to stay in the Church. Also in years gone by, there was certainly an under-supply of ministers for the pulpits in our South African Baptist Churches. I am sure that this caused both Churches and their Pastors to be more cautious and resolute in their determination to iron out difficulties. Today however the situation has reversed, and there are many potential Pastors waiting to fill vacant pulpits.

I have not discovered much in the literature about length of tenure, however in an article by the Alban Institute in the USA, Powell, (1996:13) writes about "Following the Long-term Pastor", and he points to a social phenomenon where a long-term Pastor is often followed by a Pastor who stays for a relatively short time. He calls this "**the unintentional interim**". Since this discussion goes to explore the matter of termination of ministry, and the nature of qualitative research is open ended, perhaps further studies might be done regarding this phenomena.

In the research, the length of tenures of the terminated Pastors in South Africa averaged out

at approximately 2 years. This is far below the average. Some of the terminated Pastors had "histories" of shorter ministries, and some of the Churches had "histories" of terminating their previous Pastors. One or two of the Pastors fell prey to moral problems, and one of them had a major theological paradigm shift.

It is precisely at this point that we must then ask: If Pastors have a history of shorter ministries, and keep resigning from Churches, and Churches have in turn a history of terminating their Pastors, often through conflict, why doesn't the Baptist Union Executive take action to address the matter?

In order to understand the answer to this important question which affects the matter of pastoral termination, the structures of the Baptist Union must be examined.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Pastoral termination is an escalating problem (Tharp, 1984; 1988), which demands the attention, of practical theologians as reflective practitioners. It affects not only the Church, the Pastor and his family, the denomination, but also the community within which the Church serves. From personal insight, I have noticed that the longer the tenure of a Pastor in a Church, the more he/she becomes involved in the "warp and woof" of the community, serving on committees, and making a positive contribution to the society. He is a public figure who influences not only the people in his congregation, but also the larger community. As I have already stated, much research has been done with regard to the impact of termination upon the Pastor and his family, but the focus of this research is to explore this from the perspective of the tension between the autonomy and accountability of the local Church.

It is my understanding that the problem of pastoral termination has been exacerbated by the failure, on the one hand, to hold Pastors accountable for their actions, and allowing them to hide behind the cover of the principle of autonomy, and on the other hand, there has been some failure by the denomination to hold Churches accountable for the treatment they have meted out to Pastors.

It is true that certain situations where termination takes place, although unfortunate, are often necessary. However, it is a fact that local Churches have been affected negatively as a result of the termination of their Pastor, and that this has caused these Churches to develop what I can only describe as a poor "self-image". The problem, I believe is partly due to a misconception that the Baptist principle of autonomy means that a Church is left to sort out its own problems, and any attempt to get outside help might be seen as an infringement of this principle.

I would like to explore the problem of pastoral termination from the perspective of a practical theological ecclesiology, and to concentrate the empirical research on the following questions:

- a. What impact has pastoral termination had on the local Church?
- b. How is pastoral termination affected by the ecclesiological structures in the local church?
- c. How does the tension between accountability and autonomy impact on the problem of pastoral termination?
- d. Is the existence of so called "subterranean pastors" a further factor in pastoral termination?

1.2.1 THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

An understanding of the Baptist principle of the autonomy of the local Church is essential for an understanding of a Baptist ecclesiology and a closer look at the research problem. Erickson (1990:1078) says that autonomy is one of two pillars that hold up the congregational scheme, the other being democracy (by this he means that every member has a voice in its affairs). Autonomy has to do with the concept of "freedom". Baptists affirm that they are free under the Lordship of Christ to determine their membership and leadership, and to order and structure their worship and work, and to ordain for ministry anyone they perceive as gifted to do so, to participate as they themselves determine, in the larger Body of Christ. Biblical support of the principle of autonomy or independence is found by Vedder (1969:31) in his understanding of the Churches mentioned in the book of Acts, which he says were "independent of each other in their internal affairs". He uses an argument from silence when he mentions that there is no instance of a single church or a body of churches being overruled by a superior ecclesiastical authority. Erickson (1990:1079) also says "we find no instance of control of a local Church by outside organisations or individuals".

Erickson (1990:1079) interprets the principle of autonomy that each Church is independent, and "may enter into co-operative affiliations, but these are strictly voluntary in nature". His argument stems from purely pragmatic considerations, where a church might not have the finance to send out missionaries, or have enough young people to hold a camp for example. Erickson's sardonic comment that Baptist Churches will usually accept financial assistance from higher bodies (1990:1080) with restrictions, thus limiting their autonomy illustrates this pragmatic approach.

My interpretation is that autonomy does not mean independence, nor does it simply mean freedom. In the early days of Anabaptist tradition it meant freedom from the control of the State, not from fellowship with other Baptists.

The implication of this is that Baptist stress their inter-dependence and co-operation together. Historically, the London Confession of 1644 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 have stressed the need for autonomy (Lumpkin, 1959:144,348) and for inter-congregational fellowship. Maring and Hudson (1981:6) stress that independence was never the intention of early Baptists. It was adopted to assist in local affairs of the Church, such as the admission and exclusion of members and the choosing of a Pastor, and in these exercises, it was felt that the local church needed to feel free to ascertain the will of God. This says Maring and Hudson (1981:6) "was balanced by a strong sense of interdependence". In the Philadelphia Baptist Confession in 1742, it states, "each Church has the power to order its own affairs, it is not to live in isolation."

Beasley-Murray (1992:74) quotes from a meeting of church representatives in Oxfordshire in England in 1653, where the issue of interdependence was raised. It was agreed that Churches should confer on 3 matters:

- e. Advice on controversial matters which could not be resolved by one Church on its own.
- f. The provision of financial support for any congregation in need.
- g. The common planning of the work of the Lord, common to the Churches.

In the research of the problem of pastoral termination, four of the Churches referred to the involvement of other local Churches in the problem. Mostly this input was negative in nature, and reflected little support for the Church which was experiencing pastoral termination.

The incorrect interpretation of autonomy as independence can lead to a number of problems in praxis. Once a Pastor is ordained into the ministry of a local Church, in effect he is free from any outside control from the Baptist Union. He has met the standards they have set down for theological education and spiritual maturity. He has been interviewed and accepted as part of the ministerial fraternity by the Executive of the Baptist Union. He is given the charge of leading and directing the affairs of a local Church, which he may, should he decide to do so lead away from Baptist principles of leadership and government. The Executive has tried to clamp down on this practice by changing the constitution of the Baptist Union, to which all Churches subscribe, by giving permission for members of that body to enter into discussion with Churches and Pastors should they perceive a problem to exist. However, in praxis, a good preacher and leader can lead his Church away from the Baptist Union. This happened in the early 1980's with the matter of the Hatfield Baptist Church, whose differences with the Baptist Union arose over the matter of Congregational Church Government and the autonomy of the local Church.

1.2.2 THE NEED FOR AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Setting aside the concept of a person's "calling" by God to pastoral service, and merely look at the Pastoral ministry as gainful employment, we would still have sufficient reason to ask why men, (some of whom are middle aged and are a high risk to find other employment!) choose to leave what amounts to a good job, and in fact "switch" careers so late in life, some returning to careers they left after 15-20 years, where the technology had advanced radically (i.e. the printing industry in one case).

It would have to be one of a number of serious issues that would lead to pastoral termination, notwithstanding the issues of morality, it would either be an economic problem in a smaller Church, or a "no-win" conflict situation that would cause the person who is usually the "breadwinner" of a home to make such a decision, and plunge his family into a crisis.

Besides the issues of personal crisis leading to pastoral termination, pastoral termination presents researchers with an "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 196:14) in the tension between an individual's personal freedom (autonomy) on the other hand, and their accountability to the Church, the denomination and to fellow Pastors on the other. Furthermore, autonomy of the local Church and accountability of the local Church complicates the puzzle of pastoral termination. If one of the concepts is emphasised at the expense of the other, it can lead to flawed praxis and have a deep impact upon Churches. Pastoral termination, especially forced termination has a practical relevance, in terms of the legislation of labour laws that have come about in the new Constitution in South Africa.

The significance of this research is that it points to a misunderstanding in fundamental Baptist principles, and demonstrates through the discovery of the phenomena known as subterranean Pastors, the emergence of a leadership structure fundamentally opposed to congregational Church authority. This touches the identity of Baptist congregations and what sort of leadership structure they have. This research also networks with other research around the world that is uncovering the problem of pastoral termination from other points of view and the impact that it is having on individuals, families, churches and society. In this sense, this research is one part of a much larger attempt to understand the problem in its entirety.

From a theoretical perspective, this research has relevance because it points out a flawed understanding of autonomy and accountability in the local Church. It also highlights certain aspects of the role and function of the Pastor in a local Church, and his relationship to the larger Baptist denomination.

1.4 THE MORALITY AND ETHICS OF THIS RESEARCH

What is the purpose of research into this area of Church life?

- a. Is it to act as a sort of "ecclesiastical crime reporter" uncovering acts of diminished competency on the part of the Baptist Union, Churches and colleagues?
- b. Is it to gain personal advantage; with the view that "knowledge is power" - and the more a person knows about other people's problems, the more power one wields?
- c. Is it to merely comment on what many observe to be a tragic state of affairs, with men leaving the ministry, and short comment being made at the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union to that effect?
- d. Is it to uncover a problem with the hope that others might solve it?

I would like to think that I have put effort in terms of time, money and sacrifice, into this area of Baptist Church life, for a number of reasons, namely:

People are worth it! Caring for one another in pastoral ministry is not the exclusive domain of The Executive of the Baptist Union, nor the Area Co-ordinators, and I am sure they would welcome any attempt to bring care down to grass roots level, where Pastors of Churches can also care for each other. In speaking to other Pastors, they have intimated that fraternals are poorly attended, and often only deal with philosophical or other theological issues which, while stimulating the mind, might have little to do with the reality of one's life and ministry.

In some dark times in my own life and ministry I have wanted to throw in the towel, and not known where to turn for help. I found that "carers" were more concerned about my ability to continue in my capacity as the Pastor of a Church, and not in myself as an individual. On one occasion it was suggested to my wife by a "carer", that we actually give up the ministry and seek secular employment. Fortunately, I was able to discern that this was the "soft option" or the easy way out of trouble, and certainly not what was best for my family or for the Church.

The loss of Pastors from Churches, for whatever reason is enough of a problem to warrant attention.

Mason, (1996:29) speaks about issues of personal gain or advancement, or standing or promotion as the purpose of research, but I do not have an agenda of such sort in mind. I am not really interested in norms of acceptability which goes with higher degrees, as many of my colleagues have similar and higher degrees than this. My interest in this area of Practical Theology has both

formal and informal roots. Formal, in the sense that I have always found studying to be a rewarding experience, and informal in the sense that this particular problem of pastoral termination has affected a lot of my colleagues and even impinged upon my own life. Furthermore, an interesting dimension to this study is that in the course of the research, I have been offered a pastoral position in the United States which has a minimum requirement of a Masters degree!

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I attempt to place the study within a broader theoretical framework by examining the concepts of congregational leadership and identity. The implications of the theory of leadership and the connection to accountability are explored. I also introduce the concepts of the agogic moment and living in the middle voice, which relate to the theory of accountability. Also, the existence and influence of "subterranean Pastors" in local Churches is explored. Furthermore, the problem of pastoral termination is linked to a practical theological ecclesiology. and finally the section concludes with a survey of the literature.

2.1 CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

For the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to understand the research within the broader framework of the Church and its life and role in society. The reason being is that research does not take place in a vacuum, and is not merely an academic exercise, but has the purpose to explore and change the praxis in order to facilitate the communicating of the gospel. The Baptist Union of Southern Africa, during the time frame of this study, has, for the most part depicted the congregational life of the white minority in Southern Africa. No attempt has been made at all to explore the phenomena outside of this scope. For the white, Baptist population the concept of congregations, and congregational life is embedded implicitly in our culture.

A Baptist congregation, or gathering of believers does not just provide opportunity for people to gather under a particular body of beliefs, but it provides symbols and ministry that lifts each person from the "ordinary" affairs of everyday life, and provides a sense of the "eternal" in the reality of the present.

A congregation provides a sense of dignity to the various rites of passage which mark the significant occasions of life. Seminal in these rites is the role and function of the Pastor of that congregation. Dale (1984:11) quotes Burns in describing two types of congregational leaders, namely

- a. **The Transacting Leader** - who is involved in exchanging one thing for another, a *quid pro quo* type of leadership. He allocates existing resources, and at best can be described as a manager.

- b. **The Transforming Leader** - attempts to satisfy the ever increasing needs and motives of his followers. Dale (1984:11) says, "The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. . . In the final analysis, transforming leadership becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led."

Heyns (1992:149) points out that the Church has its origin in and focus on God, but it has been sent into the world in order to serve. "Serving" involves "servants" and it is precisely here where the focus of this dissertation rests. Systematic Theology speaks to the issues of the Church being rooted and grounded in God, with Christ as the Head, but Practical Theology speaks to the acts of the people, exploring the acts of the Church as a social reality.

This social reality, provides, among other things "symbols of transcendence" that lift people above the mundane issues of life, and give them a sense of eternity. It might be well argued that in the South African context, the Baptist denomination has in fact been too quick to "transcendentalise" their faith, and take their focus off the emerging social reality, especially with a view to being the "salt and the light" in the emergence of the new nation. This can be substantiated by quoting from a letter dated June 1997, sent to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the General Secretary of the Baptist Union.

"During the years of apartheid there were many Baptists, individually and collectively, who confronted the evils of injustice and ministered to those who were suffering. On numerous occasions the Baptist Union condemned the wrongs of apartheid, commissioned correspondence and sent delegations to the government. In retrospect we confess on behalf of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa that we did not do nearly enough. Sins of omission are no less serious than sins of commission. We did not sufficiently challenge the legitimacy of unjust institutions and sometimes we hid behind our own structures. All too often we did not translate our resolutions into resolute action."

2.1.1 LEADERSHIP AND TRADITION

Dale (1984:45) says that "history tells us how we got this way". Each denomination has a distinctive corporate identity, but it cannot be said that Baptists have a distinctive style of leadership that has evolved through its tradition. In the Southern Baptist Convention, larger, influential Churches have a "Statesman-style" leader who has a high profile in denominational affairs. However, the larger Baptist Churches in South Africa have been known to call younger Pastors, in whom they see potential.

The criteria differs from place to place. In the early 1990's an emphasis was placed on the "servant leadership" style of leadership, pointing to Jesus' statement in Mark 10:45 as its basis. But discussion about leadership should not revolve so much around the "how", but rather upon the "what". This means that it is not so much "how" a Pastor's style of leadership fits a particular church, but rather on the more fundamental issue of "what" is leadership.

A simple definition of what leadership is, taken in the Baptist context, might be simply to say, "the ability to get people to follow". Here leadership is spoken of in terms of its results. You cannot be a leader if no-one is following. I would describe this as a quantitative approach to leadership, where a good leader would have a larger number of followers. Heyns (1992:191) describes leaders as those responsible for formulating goals and for inspiring people. As an example, managing types of leaders organise and use existing resources to get people to follow or to get the tasks done, like fulfilling the Great Commission. There is no doubt in the researcher's mind that there is a problem with the concept of leadership and management as it relates to congregational life. For example, in a congregation you may have any number of professionals who attend management courses and "in-house" training, who have to suffer through church business meetings that are incompetently led by a godly man who may be an inspiring speaker but a poor manager.

Heyns (1992:192) points to two characteristics that are peculiar to congregations and influence the style of management:

- a. The duality of organism and organisation
- b. The fact that a congregation is a voluntary organisation

I have yet to hear of Pastors being addressed on these issues in any sort of training, both before or during ministry.

The question arises therefore, how does a Pastor become a leader in a congregation? There are 2 legitimisation procedures (Dale, 1984:12) that identify leaders:

- a. By appointment
- b. By emergence

Usually in the ministry of a Pastor, he is "appointed" as the leader of a congregation, but it takes between 2 and five years for him to "emerge" as the real leader, with the backing and following of the people (Dale, 1984:13).

The history of a Church's Pastors, will give an indication as to what that Church values, and how it sees its identity. Usually 3 factors are in operation in the "what" of leadership (Dale, 1984)

namely, the Leader's style, the congregation's identity, and the demands of the social situation. The biblical account of the story of Esther graphically demonstrates all three of these factors in Esther 4:14. (NIV)

"Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this"

First of all Mordecai addresses the issue of the **leader's style**, when he tells Esther it was "she" who was to be used by God, with the abilities and personality that she had. Secondly, the **congregation's identity** is addressed in the fact that Esther had come to a royal position, and the people were in need of a leader. And thirdly, the demands of the **social situation** are addressed in the words "for such a time as this". This is not meant to be an exegesis of the passage but merely an interpretation and an illustration in the context of this discourse.

2.1.2 LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES AMONG BAPTISTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Practical Theology is concerned with the "scientific study of the communicative acts which serve the gospel" (Firet, 1987:260). These acts include preaching, the care of people, teaching, serving people and worship. These activities have a particular form or structure. We could, for example, speak of a "Dutch Reformed structure of worship" which might describe the particular activity of worship most commonly associated with Dutch Reformed Churches. On the other hand, the Seventh Day Adventist Church has an elaborate structure of serving the community through providing meals for people, we would therefore speak of the Seventh Day Adventist structure of service. In the research among Baptist Churches, different structures existed within each Church, e.g. the role and function of the Pastor. In one Church, the Pastor will be the Shepherd, to whom the sheep must be submissive. His leadership is rarely questioned (Heyns, 1992:196). He controls even the money and the people. In another, the Pastor is seen as the "captain of the team", and everything that happened in the Church needed his involvement and approval. In still another, he is a "hired hand", expected to use his skills to grow a struggling Church to become more viable, to be totally committed to the "work" above his family and personal life. These examples demonstrate different metaphors for the Pastor within churches in the same denomination. The structures developed to support the differing views of the Pastoral role also differ. If the Pastor is the sole leader, he may expect total loyalty and support for his ideas from his Church leadership structures. In some Churches, the Pastor is the "key player" in the team, and all team strategy and plans of action have to obtain his approval. This highlights the existing problem described in Table 1, number 10, "mismatch". Where the Pastors understanding of his role and the Church's expectation of that role differ considerably.

As a researcher, it has been interesting to ask people in Churches where there has been a lot of problems, why they put up with it for so long. In many instances, their answers support my

argument that Baptists generally have a clerical paradigm view of Practical Theology. They often refer to the Pastors exceptional skill and popularity at preaching, which they felt would bring people to their Church.

"A Challenge to Change" (1991) is a book by Nigel Wright, a Baptist Minister from the United Kingdom, which addresses problems with structures in the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Wright (1991:61) says that the problem once structures have been established to serve the life of the people, is that there is an inevitable tendency for those structures to forget the purpose for which they were created, and to become self-important. Although this is perhaps a little speculative, it was interesting to assess this statement, and understand Wright's ecclesiological paradigm. Wright writes from a mainly charismatic perspective, which has singularly shaped his ecclesiology. He is critical of the structures of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. It is interesting to note that the Churches which have moved into this charismatic ecclesiological paradigm in South Africa have, in my observation, usually been pastored by people with strong personalities, and the Church has moved more away from Congregational Church authority to a more presbyterian type of leadership structure.

Most of the structures that affect the life of a Pastor of the Baptist Union have been in place for decades, with little change. These structures are relics of an age when the number of Churches outweighed the number of Pastors. During these times, there was more pressure on both Church and Pastor to resolve conflict that arose. However, at present, there is no denominational structure in place that addresses the matter of pastoral termination alone, in South African Baptist Churches. People who regularly address the problem from within the structures have other significant roles to play in the Baptist Union as well, understandably therefore, because of the complexity of the matter, it is not receiving enough attention. The complexity I will demonstrate through the research is compounded by two other factors, namely the autonomy of the local Church, and paradoxically accountability among Churches and Pastors.

2.1.3 THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Heyns (1992:139) points out that structures have to do with "the way in which activities in a congregation are planned and organised". Structures are not merely functional, having to do with effectiveness and efficiency, but there are theoretical and social considerations as well. Heyns (1992:148) also says that structures are not "timeless truths which are derived from Scripture and applicable in every situation". This is true of the principle of autonomy of the local Church.

It might be argued that this principle developed out of the interpretation of certain Scriptures, especially in the book of Acts, but I believe that it is more a belief that has grown out of history,

especially the early Anabaptist clashes with authorities, and their insistence on the principle of the separation of Church and State.

There are a number of different Church structures referred to in the New Testament, Baptists have chosen one commonly known as "Congregational Church authority", as opposed to an Episcopal, or Presbyterian structure. One focus of this understanding is that Local Churches are a microcosm of the Universal Church, of which Christ is the Head. They are therefore answerable to Him alone. This autonomy does not mean "independence", but rather is interpreted as "interdependence", where Churches co-operate with one another to expand the Kingdom of God.

The concept of autonomy, however can lead to abuse, especially when problems and divisions occur, because there is no accountability to a higher body for resolution of the problem. The Baptist Union has sought to rectify this with the inclusion of certain clauses in their constitution which allow them to engage Churches in discussion when there are problems which become evident. The argument is that when a Church or a Pastor seeks recognition by a denomination, they have a collective responsibility to that denomination, and in a sense assume that denominations goals and ideals, therefore should be accountable to the denomination. However this is more implicit than explicit in Baptist teaching and practice.

Because of the principle of the autonomy of the local Church, no two Baptist Churches are the same in practice. There are certain similar elements in every church, but the way in which Churches move from the theory, say, of autonomy, to the praxis, differs. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:33) uses different models to assist in the concretisation of theory, and to give praxis some theory. Examining the structures of the Church it is helpful to reproduce a precis of Heyns' models here.

Heyns (1992:277ff) refers to different models of the Church. Firstly he refers to what he calls:

- a. **The Institutional Model** - a model that finds its basis in authority, that which is invested in the Pastor and leadership, sometimes by virtue of ordination. A clear hierarchy exists. It may be illustrated by means of a triangle (Heyns, 1992:280) at the top of which is the God appointed leader, and the further down the triangle you go, the less importance you have for decision making. With reference to this model and the role of the Pastor, it is to be noted that Baptists have attempted to steer away from anything connected to the word "hierarchy" in leadership structures.

- b. **The Koinonial Model** - This model arises from a need within people for fellowship at a more meaningful level.
- c. **The Sacramental Model** - Heyns points out that this model was an attempt to reconcile the Institutional and Koinonial models and is mainly developed by Roman Catholic theologians who see the Church as a sacrament of Christ.
- d. **The Kerygmatic Model** - The cornerstone of this model (Heyns, 1992:294) is the content to be proclaimed, the Word of God. However, while this is a strong Protestant principle, I believe that there has developed a strong emphasis on not merely the content of the proclamation, the Word of God, but the actual act of proclaiming, and the preachers themselves. Phrases like "pulpit-driven ministry" and "dynamic speaker" and "international ministry" all point to personalities, which seem to be a key issue in this model, and point again to a clerical paradigm.
- e. **The Diaconal Model** - emphasises a Church that exists for the sake of others. The clergy in this model do not confine their attention to the Church only, but to the wider community (Heyns, 1992:302). I would point out that the Church's primary aim is to serve God, and glorify Him. An emphasis on this model of the Church might result in it becoming merely a societal institution, like the Boy Scouts.
- f. **Other Models** - Heyns (1992:303) points out that churches are also organised and structured around geographic areas, especially where there is only one church of a particular denomination in that area, or where there is a particular societal structure, i.e. in a rural community, however it is not only territory that is important. In a larger community, where there might be a number of Baptist Churches, people might attend a Church where their family has attended for generations, or where they feel they can be of more service. Some might attend a smaller Church out of preference for a more intimate community. Sometimes, where there are large numbers of people who have something in common, i.e. single young adults, or divorcees, it can give the reason for the existence of a Church, i.e. Club 7 in Johannesburg in the early 1980's comprising solely of teenagers.

The Structure adopted theoretically by Baptists insists that each Baptist Church is

autonomous in its own right, and may conduct its own affairs without interference from any outside body or group. It voluntarily seeks fellowship with other Churches to co-operate in programmes that include missions and theological training and evangelism. Firstly it is part of an area Association, based on geography, then secondly it is part of a Union of Churches throughout Southern Africa, and finally it is part of a world-wide family of Baptists called the Baptist World Alliance.

Each local Church is represented at associational level and national level by a number of delegates, depending on the size of the Church. Associations meet usually quarterly and the national assembly annually. Through the Baptist Union, Churches receive Pastors that have achieved a certain level of competence in theological disciplines and personal maturity. However a church may at any time call a Pastor without consultation with the Baptist Union. The criteria usually being that according to a Local Church's constitution, the incumbent is a recognised Pastor by Baptist Union standards, and their name appears on the lists published in the Handbooks.

The Baptist Union functions through its Executive, consisting of elected members from the annual assembly, and others from various structures within the Union.

This introduction is helpful in understanding the structure and functioning of the Baptist denomination, but also that there is no fixed concept of leadership in a local congregation. As long as no serious transgression takes place, Churches generally conduct their own affairs without interference from any outside body. Some Churches might be more "charismatic" in their worship, others more "liturgical". However, when conflict arises between the Church and the Pastor, either a representative of the association, or the Baptist Union, or both, will attempt to deal with the matter.

The implications of this loose structure is that there is no particular model for leadership, nor structure for a Local congregation. The Baptist Union of Churches is a collection of local Churches who choose to be inter-dependent, as opposed to independent, who co-operate with each other collectively to facilitate the extension of the Kingdom of God. One congregation may be charismatic in worship and kerygmatic in structure, another may be a small rural church ministering to immigrant Portuguese in the south of Johannesburg.

Pastors too adopt different leadership styles, which makes it difficult for local congregations to match their needs with the style of a particular Pastor. In this way, they rely on the knowledge that the Baptist Union has gained of the Pastor over the years, through his training, and involvement in associational and denominational affairs.

Congregational leadership structures in Baptist Churches place great emphasis on two

important issues, namely the rights and privileges of individual members, commonly known as “congregational church government”, and secondly the belief in the autonomy of the local Church. In the first instance I believe there is a problem with nomenclature in the sense that the word “govern” means “to impose regulations upon something or someone”, it is probably not the best terminology to describe the privilege each member of a Baptist Church has in being an integral part of the dynamic life of a congregation in all its facets, but especially in the decision making process of a local Church. Furthermore, the issue of Church authority and responsibility is based on the more fundamental issue of the priesthood of all believers, and in no way can that concept be linked to the term “govern”. And in the second instance, there is a problem with the interpretation of the autonomy of a Church.

Church leadership structures as has already been mentioned are not timeless truths, (Heyns, 1992:139) but they are an indispensable part of the Church, even if they do not belong to its essence. Presbyterian and Episcopal and Baptist forms of leadership can be based on Scripture with equal intensity, it is just that Baptists opt for the one and not the other. Leadership structures, it must be noted, are conditioned, not only by Scripture, but also by the social context in which the Church operates. Moving from one pastorate to another, may involve adjusting a Pastor’s leadership style to the structure he/she will inherit in the new Church. E.g. some churches are comfortable that their leadership spends any amount of money without their approval, others Churches have definite limits as to the authority of the leadership. In some instances the Pastor guides the congregation for whom they should vote at the annual assembly, in others the Pastor simply carries out the wishes of the congregation in the matter.

From one Church to another, the implications for leadership structure might vary. Some churches are comfortable with a more autocratic style of leadership that reflects what Heyns (1992:190) calls the “Shepherd-Flock” model. Other churches historically operate with a “Body of Christ” model. There is no defined “Baptist” style of leadership.

Heyns (1992:279) differentiates between the Church as an institution and the idea of institutionalism. When a denomination becomes institutionalised, it loses its spontaneity and vitality, and struggles to contextualise itself to the ever-changing demands of the society within which it ministers. When an organisation is floundering, it tends to develop and focus its attention on establishing a complicated bureaucracy, which emphasises endless committees meetings that are far removed from the life of the Church. In this scenario, a person’s value to the group is determined by the number of committees on which they serve and the amount of knowledge they possess about the system. There is almost a morbid fascination with committees and meetings, and being elected onto such.

An illustration of the failure by the Baptist Union of Southern Africa to "understand the times" occurred in 1989 at the Kimberley assembly. Up to that point the whole denomination was sensitised to the rising hostility towards apartheid in South Africa, and the underlying racial tensions had almost manifest themselves in the King William's Town, Cape Town and Pretoria assemblies. We were hearing testimonies of imprisonment on Robben Island and of the fear and anger and resentment that was rising. However, in the times of deep anger and resentment by Black Churches in the Baptist Convention, the 1989 Assembly was held in Kimberley, but more specifically at one of the army barracks in the city. The very symbol of force that bolstered the apartheid regime was to host the assembly that year, forcing all delegates, both black and white to be confronted with the symbols, which were powerful expressions of emotion, of apartheid. The ensuing debacle, was an embarrassment to all, and the ensuing walkout and split from the Baptist Union by the Convention has still to be healed. I think it was partly the structures of the Baptist Union that acted without accountability that were to blame. But mostly it was all of us, who failed to see how powerful symbols could be.

2.1.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG BAPTISTS

The issue of accountability is very precarious among Baptists. The principles of the autonomy of the local Church and the Priesthood of all believers are given as support for independence or a lack of accountability. Smith, N. (1994:3) says that some ministers feel they are accountable to no-one and may become dictatorial and controlling. The problem among Baptists is holding both the autonomy of the local Church and its accountability in a tension, and in fact involves an issue of morality.

The Baptist Union, by virtue of its control of the issue of marriage licences, and the power it has to accredit a Pastor, and the fact that a Church usually has this accreditation as a criterion in its constitution for the calling of a Pastor has a certain authority which it may exercise.

When a person becomes a fully accredited Pastor within the Baptist Union, the issue of accountability becomes more of a voluntary matter. With virtually no control outside the Church over a Pastor, he is able to lead and manage the local Church as he wants. I believe this to be an area of flawed praxis.

2.1.5 THE TENSION BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Historically the Baptist understanding of autonomy arose out of history, rather than a clear call from Scripture. It was the attempt by early Baptists to ensure that a separation was maintained between the Church and State. Kitchens (1992:152), says that accountability means submission to

discipline, and traditionally this has always formed part of the Baptist identity. Anabaptists were the most outspoken and committed in the practice of discipline. In their teaching, discipline was called "the rule of Christ" (Kitchens, 1992:57). Their motto demonstrated their belief, namely: "NO DISCIPLINE - NO CHURCH".

From a theoretical perspective, there needs to be a tension between authority and accountability, in the life of Pastors, congregations and the Baptist Church as a whole. But especially in the life of a Pastor. Cramb (1996:70) says that debates have arisen whether the pastoral ministry is a profession or a calling. If it is a "calling" this affects accountability in the sense that the one called is accountable only to God. On the basis of this, an argument could be made that there can be no code of ethics for the pastoral ministry, the fact that the Church expects ethical behaviour together with a commitment to a godly lifestyle would be sufficient to elicit ethical responsibility.

Cramb's thesis is a call for a more professional approach to pastoral ministry, and he (1996:70) gives 4 criteria that characterise a profession, they are:

- a. Possession of knowledge and skills not available to the population at large
- b. Autonomy, including self-regulation
- c. Facilitating a process or an action on behalf of clients who consider it for their benefit
- d. A moral commitment to their client's interests above their own.

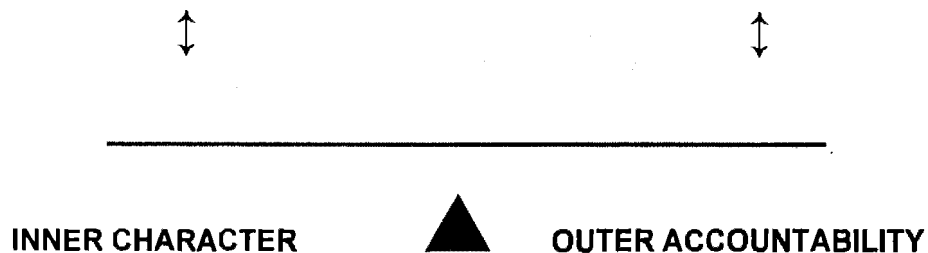
Pastoral ministry has inherent problems with autonomy. Baptist Pastors, having agreed to the criteria for admission to their ranks, have virtually no control over admission and expulsion. At the annual assembly it is usually *fait accompli*.

Unlike other professions, they are subject to having their performance reviewed by non-members of the pastoral ranks (Church members). In some Churches the voting age of members is as low as 14 years old, with such young people making decisions that affect not only the life of the Church, but such matters as perhaps the discipline of the Pastor, his stipend, and possible termination.

In other professions, e.g. psychologists, the "professionals" are the practitioners and clients or patients benefit from the expertise of the professional. The pastoral "profession" on the other hand, says Cramb (1996:71), is an extension of the ministry of the Church and in the Pastoral ministry, the Pastor speaks for the Church. There have been criminal cases in the U.S.A., where the Church itself has been sued because of the counsel or censure of the Pastor.

Kitchens (1992:31), says that there should be a balance in the life and ministry of a Pastor, in order to keep things in perspective. He maintains that in order for there to be such a balance, two forces must be in operation, namely inner character and outer accountability. His argument is that you cannot have authority without accountability otherwise it may lead towards becoming dictatorial. Kitchens (1992:32) argues that the Christian faith is a matter of relationships, and in relationships, like in a family, each member is held accountable to the others for their responsibilities and actions.

ILLUSTRATION 2: AN ATTEMPT TO ILLUSTRATE A BALANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BETWEEN INNER CHARACTER AND OUTER ACCOUNTABILITY



2.1.6 THE BAPTIST SYSTEM OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is the process by which a man or a woman becomes eligible to be called a Baptist Pastor and lead a local congregation. It is the conferring of a status upon a person, and a recognition that such a person has met a certain level of spiritual and academic requirements.

Upon completion of an acceptable level of theological training, a candidate for ministry will apply for accreditation by the Baptist Union. After three, one hour interviews covering different aspects of his life, he may be recognised as a "Probationer Minister" for a period of two years, during this time he will be allocated a ministerial advisor, who submits a report at the end of the period. Upon completion of the probationer period, by the vote of the annual assembly, the person is placed on the fully accredited list of Baptist ministers. Accreditation is in a sense a recognition of status, and while it is primarily the recognition by the Baptist Union that a person has completed a basic requirement of theological training, and achieved a certain level of Christian maturity, local Churches may still confer upon people the status of Pastor, without reference at all to the Baptist Union. This again relates to the matter of accountability, where Churches operate without reference to the larger Baptist body.

2.2 THE IMPLICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A congregation is the Body of Christ, it is a part of the people of God, it has a spiritual

character, as such it stresses the need for accountability. But a congregation is also an organisation in need of effective and efficient leadership. Much of the focus of ecclesiology today is on the organic aspect of congregational life and the emphasis on body life ministry, but there is an equally true and important aspect of Church life from an organisational framework. In an attempt to understand the how a local Church functions, it is equally important to analyse the Church from an anthropological, social psychological, theological and organisational development perspective (Carroll, 1986:9).

2.2.1 LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES IN ACCREDITATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The issue of accountability addresses the matter about to whom a leader is responsible, mostly for his observable conduct, or public behaviour. In 1.1.2.4 I addressed the matter of accountability in ministry until the point of being accepted onto the "Fully Accredited Pastors' list" of the Baptist Union. After that time, the individual Pastor is really only accountable to God and the local congregation. Fiet (1986:15), believes the most essential element in pastoral role-fulfilment is an understanding that a person assisting people in problem situations acts, not by virtue of his own superior position, but in the name of the Lord of the Church, and with the Word of God. On the basis of this it might be possible to speak of a Pastor's accountability only to God, based on the perception that he/she is called by God to pastoral work, and therefore only accountable to Him.

Smith, N. (1994:3) feels that some Pastors are accountable to no-one, they have become dictatorial and controlling in their abuse of power, which inevitable leads to open conflict. This relates to Kitchen's concept (1992:30) that Pastors may become dictatorial without accountability.

There is, also strong Biblical support for accountability from 3 passages, and the practices of Jesus and the Apostle Paul:

Colossians 3:16 *"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom."*

Ephesians 5:21 *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"*

James 5:16a *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other .."*

In the sense that Jesus was an equipper, he taught his disciples the theory, and then He sent them out into life related ministry. This was a cyclical rather than a linear process. There was constant theoretical reflection, modelling, and action. Passages that support this are Matthew 10:1-42; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-5. On their return from such ministry trips, they would report to Jesus: clearly a case

of accountability, then further instruction and training followed.

The Apostle Paul evidenced the principle of accountability in his writings. He called others to follow or imitate him (personal accountability), and he called Churches and believers to be responsible in their actions.

No matter what sort of biblical leadership structure a Church adopts, autonomy does not mean independence or freedom from obligations (1.1.2.4). And what goes for the Church, also goes for the Pastor. It is noted that currently, Baptist Ministers' fraternals are poorly attended, national retreats are cancelled and a general lethargy exists in the area of accountability to one another. There could be many reason for this, not the least of which is the ever-growing social dilemma known as the privatisation of religion, where an individual's faith is a personal matter. From a theoretical perspective, there are 3 different ways accountability can be addressed:

2.2.1.1 THE AGOGIC MOMENT

Firet (1986:13) speaks about an "agogic moment" which draws attention to the issue of accountability in ministry. The growing number of Pastors leaving the ministry speak about the lack of care they experienced from the denomination and other Pastoral colleagues (Onley, 1994:64). What is needed is a sense of belonging to one another or a unifying energy that will enable us to declare that we are in the act of being guided by others. Firet's "agogy" comes from the Greek word (transliterated "agōgos") which means "a guide, an escort or the act of nursing a child". In English we have borrowed a Germanic word which comes from the same root, namely "kindergarten" - the place where a child is "guided".

Agogy, in my interpretation of Firet, is the force that causes a person to want to change in some meaningful way. For example, in the act of preaching, an agogic moment should be reached, where the hearers make a voluntary decision to act upon the truth they have heard. In the matter of autonomy and accountability, the agogic moment occurs when a Pastor realises that he cannot go it alone, like a maverick, but needs help. This is especially true in the case of moral failure as the means of pastoral termination and the recovery from that situation. In a case of moral failure, there is a need for both therapy, care and agogy. Therapy is a mostly medical activity, care is the activity where the person is helped to refocus on their relationship to God, and agogy is the process of redirecting of a person's moral behaviour to certain acceptable norms. This activity cannot be done alone, which leads me to the second means of addressing the sub-problem.

2.2.1.2 LIVING IN THE "MIDDLE VOICE"

The fact is that Pastors of Churches claim independence and autonomy, still does not detract from the fact that there should be at least accountability to God as the One who calls a man into ministry, and to the Church, who calls a man to be their "agogos". But also there is accountability to the body of men whom they join as spiritual leaders, or Pastors of Churches. This I call **"living in the middle voice"** (Quoted in Cramb, 1996:107).

In the Greek language, (Vaughan & Gideon, 1979:90), the "voice" tells how the action of a verb is related to the subject. There are 3 voices in New Testament Greek, active, middle and passive:

Active emphasises the action, whereas passive emphasises the subject being acted upon. He receives the action rather than produces it. The middle voice calls special attention to the subject in some way participating in the result of the action.

Robertson (Vaughan & Gideon, 1979:91) says it is essentially the "voice of personal interest", it represents the subject as acting in relation to himself.

Take the verb "to kill" for example:

Active Voice:	I kill
Passive Voice:	I am being killed
Middle Voice:	I commit euthanasia

I interpret the middle voice to mean that I participate in an action, which I initiate, but over which, once initiated I have little control, but with which I must co-operate.

In the context of accountability, the principle of "living in the middle voice" implies that there can be no such thing as a "maverick mentality". It means that Pastors are accountable, primarily to God, and to the Church, but also to themselves and their peers for their actions. This can be especially beneficial in the case of a Pastor who is terminated because of sexual misconduct, but then seeks to be restored into ministry.

The process of restoration for the Pastor should involve counselling, care and his submission to a "mentoring relationship" which in effect means being part of a process of restoration that another might activate, and over which the counselee has little control. It allows another to speak into a person's life.

And it could be here that an essential problem lies. A "calling" to the ministry, in some people's minds implies accountability only to God, and that should elicit ethical accountability, but in practice this is far from true. The Baptist Union has sought in its pre-accreditation stage to make Probationer Ministers accountable to a senior Pastor, to whom they have to give regular reports. It is usually left to the Student to initiate meetings and discuss matters related to his/her ministry. Despite what some might say. This system has, according to the questions I have asked among colleagues, for the most part, not worked. From discussions with Pastors, little, or usually no contact is made, except prior to their final approval by the ministry board shortly before their final interview.

2.2.1.3 MENTORING

Mentoring has become a popular concept in the life of many Christians and has re-surfaced through many books on the subject. There is no need to enter into an apologetic for the practice, but it is important to comment that a mentoring relationship provides concrete leadership models of how pastoral work should be done.

Mentors are guides and teachers, who not only relate to a Pastor professionally but also personally. They have already arrived at the place where the person being mentored wants to go, and they provide sounding boards and a point of reference for leadership. Breton (1988:152), believes that a mentoring relationship should be initiated by the person seeking mentoring, and it should remain an informal relationship.

There have been many public promises by some denominational leaders who have stated, "I'll be there for you if you need me" but they are soon seen to be just that - promises, which are never actualised.

One young pastoral couple, in a difficult ministry only for six months finally terminated because of the pressure in their local Church, never had one visit from anyone in denominational leadership until after the resignation was "*fait accompli*", and then it was just to pick up the pieces of the Church, even though people in leadership knew of the deteriorating situation.

The actions by anyone in the caring profession are under close scrutiny, and too often Pastors have become part of the syndrome that "nothing succeeds like failure!" In this statement, you find a truthful, but rather cynical observation in that when something is going wrong in a person's life and ministry, the news will travel around the denomination very fast, and everyone has an opinion on the matter. Suddenly the person involved in the controversy becomes an immediate "success" in that they provide material for gossip, jokes, "how not to do it" stories and such like.

2.2.2 SUBTERRANEAN PASTORS

Faulkner's concept (1986:21) of subterranean Pastors needs some analysis at a theoretical level, hence it's inclusion at this point before the section on the research.

Every church has more than one Pastor. Some are overtly "called" by God and appointed by the local Church, they are what Dale (1984:12), calls "appointed" leaders. Some are placed (Methodist) or given orders (e.g. Salvation Army). But no matter what circumstances surround the appointment, a Pastor will be faced with existing or "emergent" (Dale, 1984:12) leaders in a congregation, either in a multi-staffed Church, or in terms of "lay-leadership". Leaders who have developed and emerged within the particular congregation through it's history.

Subterranean Pastors often occupy positions of importance in the leadership structure of a local Church. Either the Church secretary, treasurer, or elder. Sometimes they can be the wife or husband of a position in leadership, even the Pastor's spouse.

While we must agree on the existence on subterranean Pastors as a "second force" of leadership in Baptist Churches, we should also understand from a positive perspective that we have many gifted, spiritual men and women who exercise Godly authority, based on love in their Churches. They too might be called subterranean Pastors in a more positive sense of the phrase. The biblical picture of Paul the senior Pastor and Timothy the young subterranean Pastor comes to mind.

An insecure Pastor will feel threatened by anyone he would perceive to be a threat to his leadership or someone trying to usurp his authority. Early in his ministry he learns that he must "go it alone". The friends he had while at seminary are now scattered, and the 4 years spent in training were far different from the life he now experiences. A call for help is an indication of failure. The person appointed as advisor is seldom consulted.

A subterranean Pastor has prior knowledge of "how things work around here" the systems and structures in operation. Rather than explain clearly the "how", they know that knowledge is power and they are able to exercise some authority because they are familiar with the "system".

Another factor that impinges on the issue of terminated Pastors was that there were not just subterranean Pastors but also "subterranean problems" extant in the congregation when he arrived.

The Pastor begins his ministry as a sort of "palimpsest" over the undercurrents and plots of which he is unaware, and which are still being played out. Pro- and anti- the previous Pastor factions

still do battle at meetings, and over these he attempts to write his own ministry. Following a Pastor who has terminated because of a moral failure has its own problems. People tend to generalise and fit the position with the problem. A lack of distrust in the new Pastor exists for some time.

2.2.2.1 SUBTERRANEAN PASTORS AND POWER

Power, too is a subject for analysis in the sense that every relationship can be analysed in terms of its balance of power. With power comes responsibility. A Pastor who is unaware of the power inherent in his position is in danger because he may use that power irresponsibly.

Power itself is neutral, it is a matter of whether it is used appropriately or abused by a pastor that is determinative. Campolo (1988:13), says that "power is used by God, but not for redemptive purposes". His argument is that God redeems, renews and heals through His **love**. Power, says Campolo is used to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

The difference between "power" and "authority" is that the former is the ability to make people accede to your will even against their own wills, thus emphasising its coercive nature. While the latter is the ability to get others to comply to do your will without the coercive element, what we can call "legitimised power" (Weber, quoted in Campolo, 1988:14). Power without legitimisation is called "naked power".

Van der Ven (1996:296) introduces a third concept to this Weberian idea, namely that of "influence", and he uses this term to clarify his understanding of the issue of power and authority in that power is the influencing of feeling, thinking, being motivated and acting, involving the emotions, perceptions, cognitions of people. Authority on the other hand is the "influencing that is acknowledged" (Van der Ven, 1996:296)

Subterranean Pastors as emergent leaders (Dale, 1984:12) have a fairly insecure status since their following is very much influenced by moods and emotions of the congregation, whereas in a local Church situation, the Pastor is primarily appointed, by means of his recognition as a Fully accredited minister of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, then secondly by the free vote of a local Church but this vote in no way confirms upon him acceptance in the congregation. The vote makes him the preacher, the worship leader, the administrator, the one who dedicates, marries and buries. But it takes around 2 years to become the "Pastor" of the Church (Brandt, 1977). The stress here is on the role of relationships and their development in the life of a Pastor and the Church.

A congregational vote establishes a man or a woman in a leadership role, but roles tend to

erode as time passes. It is more relationships that keep a Pastor effective within that Church as time changes his status from just being the appointed leader to being the emergent one.

2.5.1 SUBTERRANEAN PASTORS IN THE LITERATURE

Much of the literature on the subject of pastoral termination falls under the heading of what I would call, "personal testimony" type of literature. It focusses on the personal experiences of individuals as they have experienced forced termination. Onley, (1994:14) gives a personal account of the wife of a Southern Baptist Pastor, and their experience of being "terminated" is very insightful. Onley, herself a denominational employee and her husband were "terminated" from pastoral ministry through the efforts of a subterranean Pastor (whom they call the "leading lady"). A number of interesting aspects emerge from their "life story". Notably the manipulation of the constitution of their Church by the subterranean Pastor to get them out.

Between the lines it becomes apparent that this couple no longer serve within their original Baptist denomination anymore, and they are critical of what she calls (1994:63ff) the "big business of Baptist leadership".

In his book, entitled "Churches that Abuse", Enroth (1992), gives insight into some of the extremes and fanaticism and "subterranean problems" that usually are only heard about second hand. The issues of abusive churches which have had a history of "terminating" Pastors came out strongly in the research, his book gives a balance to Onley's "testimony style" of writing as it points to the abuse of Churches and members by Pastors as well.

2.3 THE LINK TO A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

The difference between a systematic theological ecclesiology and practical theological ecclesiology is that the latter is more concerned with the functioning of the Church in society, whereas the former is concerned with the "words" associated with the Church, i.e. confessions and creeds.

For the purpose of this dissertation, a practical theological ecclesiology would want to explore the functioning of the local Baptist Church through worship, fellowship, proclamation witness, instruction, service and care.

There is no doubt that the Pastor, his wife and family are deeply affected and even

traumatised by being terminated from a ministry. A lot of the work done in the Southern Baptist Convention has focussed on this aspect solely. The "Leader Care" ministry and the "Antioch Affection", ministries of the Texas and Tennessee Baptist Conventions both focus on the plight of the terminated Pastor and his family. But little material was found that focussed on the impact by the Pastor's termination on the Church, association and denomination.

Van der Ven (1996:248) points out the importance of what he calls "community formation" in the Church, and he deals with the breakdown in this process, and the resulting conflict. From a practical theological ecclesiological perspective conflict causes a Church and denomination to lose its focus and diminish its energy. The time and resources of a Church and denomination are focussed on solving the issues related to conflict. De Roest's work (1998:10) reflects on the communicative identity of a community which changes and needs to be reformulated through a process of discourse, so that they are able to understand and communicate who they are and who they seek to be.

I think that the Baptist concept of practical theology is partly at fault here. In our seminaries, there has mostly been an emphasis on the so-called applicationist view (De Roest, 1998:18) that practical theology is merely the application of the deeper truths of dogmatics and fits into the curriculum of clergy education, who have to learn to translate from theory to practice. The common teaching is that the Pastor must be the theologian for the congregation.

Farley (1987:8), says that applicationist exploration is "perverse", and insists, that in practical theology, it includes the following:

- a. The Church's situation
- b. The praxis dimension of theology

He calls this the "theological interpretation of situations", a self-conscious, self-critical and disciplined activity. The "tasks" involved in this exercise as the need to identify the situation by describing its salient features.

Since situations in the present have a "history", it is important to probe the past, and a need to lift the inquiry above the immediate context of that particular situation. In this study, it could well be asked whether pastoral termination was the problem within a certain geographic region, or within the whole South African situation, or even a global phenomenon.

Farley (1987:8) refers to a theological element, namely the task of interpreting the situation demands a discipline of faith. Here in this context we must of course look biblically into the sinful nature of mankind and our propensity toward evil. There is an inherent attraction about failure, which

I have earlier referred to as the "success of failure" which distracts Christians like spectators at a road accident.

From their part, Churches want to close the book on the past, which is an impossible task, no matter how delightful the prospect might seem. Niebuhr (1929:47) wrote:

"We do not destroy this past of ours; it is indestructible. We carry it with us; its record is written deep within our lives. We only refuse to acknowledge it as our true past and try to make it an alien thing . . . but this unremembered past endures"

There is little about pastoral termination in print from a local (South African Baptist) theoretical perspective, but in the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention, both Nationally and at Associational level has published works on the subject. Individuals have contributed at a personal level in the writing of articles and books.

It is an important reference for all Baptists that they remember and recall their history, hence I would argue for the inclusion of even "testimony" type literature as a source in this thesis. One Church or person's struggle with pastoral termination is a microcosm of the denomination's struggle.

Sources of information on this subject include the Internet, through the Infoseek search engine, and searching through the phrase "forced termination". As a result of this electronic research, the global picture becomes more apparent, and authors and other interested people can be contacted with a view to networking.

In an interesting, undated article, referring to practical theology in the global picture, Tracy (p140) argues that "mutually critical correlations" between the constantly changing life situation and the religious situation must be interpreted, and the exercise of bringing in the global situation must be attended to.

The small, struggling Baptist Church, threatened with closure because of pastoral termination should NOT be forgotten because of the larger picture. I agree with Tracy that to focus only on the "local situation" on the one hand or the "global situation" on the other is really to downplay the full demands of the practical theological analysis of the issue of "The Exodus of Baptist Ministers".

2.4 A CONGREGATION'S "IDENTITY"

The tension between autonomy and accountability cannot be fully dealt with from a theoretical perspective without investigating the issue of congregational identity, because both these factors are part of what makes up a Baptist Church. In some Church circles, when the name Baptist is mentioned, the thing that comes to mind in some people is, "Oh they're the independents!" or "They're the autonomous Church". This indicates that autonomy (and accountability) are issues that relate to the identity of the Church.

One problem with the issue of pastoral termination, especially when it is a "forced" termination is that it causes a Church to lose its focus. The conflict or moral dilemma they are often plunged into, causes a Church to have myopic vision. Churches go to great lengths to make a positive impact on a community. The research showed that the Churches which had experienced pastoral termination struggled with their "image" and became more introspective and defensive.

Van der Ven (1993:38) points out that the "basis" of a Church hardly changes without dramatic consequences. It has to do with its traditions, while identity on the other hand has to be formulated again and again, it must change with the social context in which a local Church finds itself. Social context affects the identity of the Church deeply. Here is an illustration:

A Young graduate enters his first pastorate. He has little contact with his denomination except the usual circulars and letters. However, he comes to an understanding and a conviction that in his particular context there are just no good leaders. It's a young congregation, and he dare not burden them with the heavy responsibility of Christian leadership just yet. In theory he adheres to a congregational form of Church structure, but the young Pastor finds himself being the secretary, the treasurer, the decision-maker of the Church. In Practice - he's an Anglican! 2 years later, the Church has an established identity with this form of leadership, and doesn't want to change. There are leaders, but the Pastor is the "Number One" - the question is: Does this exclude it from being a Baptist Church?

Here's a problem with **identity**. What is it that makes Baptists, Baptist? There are certain fundamental issues which are distinctives to Baptist ecclesiology. Other important issues like the direct Lordship of Christ, the authority of Scripture, Baptists share with other believers. But the cluster of distinctives that mark us out are derivative from the basics.

The New Testament points to different forms of Church structures, (1.1.2.3) Congregational, Presbyterian and Episcopal. Baptist have opted for a Congregational structure on the basis of their understanding of the "distinctive" issues and their interpretation of them.

The issue of identity concerns the issue of "us". What are our beliefs, values, patterns,

symbols and stories. The very things that help us describe ourselves as "WE". (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney, 1986:21).

On the one hand, our identity must be summed up in the person of Jesus Christ. We are the Body of which He is the Head. But in the methods used to describe a congregation, they never deny the theological understanding of the nature of the local Church, but in understanding a Church's nature, it is essential to understand its expression within its community. Just as Christians have different personalities, so can a congregation.

If one had to look at the identity of the Baptist Union say 10 years ago, seen at its annual assembly, it would have been mostly white, mostly male, but the changes most brought about by the changing social context in South Africa have forced the identity of the denomination to change. It is unfortunate that the opposite wasn't the case. With regret we can look to other denominations and see how they have been catalysts for change to take place. They have spoken as the conscience for their society.

There are a number of dimensions that contribute towards identity according to the Handbook for Congregational Studies (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney, 1986:21ff).

a. History - its representation of the past and its expectation of the future

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa has a story that traces its life in the course of its existence. It must be remembered that history is essential in the formation of identity. However it is important to distinguish our history from that which is "historic". Historic occasions are not just important times for the denomination, when they meet together, but they are the times when the denomination is at a crossroads, or at a turning point. A major segment of South African Baptist history waits to be gathered from the black Pastors and congregations, and from those imprisoned under the apartheid regime. In the new South Africa, history must be written from an African perspective and not merely be the story of the colonial missionary movement and growth of the denomination.

b. Heritage - the integrative and transformative forces of tradition

Heritage legitimises a group's outlook and ideals. In the past, history has reflected what white South African Baptists consider to be important, and in the previous paragraph I argued for an understanding of the history from an African context. Heritage however, is what makes Baptist part of the Christian tradition.

Carroll, et al (1986:26) refer to the difference between “great tradition” and “little tradition”. In Baptist life, great tradition would refer to issues like “*solus scriptura*”, and the Lordship of Christ. Little traditions refer to issues like worship styles and choices of music, which reflect the heritage of a particular congregation. It is in these areas that much change has taken place in recent decades. Baptists have always prided themselves for being known as “People of the Book”. This heritage has contributed towards their particular identity and embodies a congregation’s fundamental vision. Much of Baptist heritage reflects what immigrants brought to this country, and we have had a distinctly Eurocentric heritage in the past. In examining the influences upon Churches in modern times, it is becoming obvious that Southern Baptists and other American traditions are having more of an impact on South African Baptist life. This is evidenced in styles of worship and music.

c. World View - perceptions of both order and of crises that counter it

In order to make sense of life, we have developed a particular perspective of it. Our world view is the “shape” which we attribute to the experiences around us which we receive through our senses. This is one of the factors that binds a congregation together in a roughly common pattern.

An illustration: As a reflective practitioner, it has been interesting to note that the Baptist Denomination has brought many expatriot Zimbabweans together. Many of these people were deeply traumatised by the bush war there. They have a particular world view or perception of the reality of the changing social scene in South Africa, and because of their recent **history** some struggle to make a positive contribution to Church life. Many have become “cynical observers” of what is happening in South Africa. Maintaining a “laager mentality”, my observation has been that their world view is that South Africa is doomed to repeat the performance in their own country.

d. Symbols - their cohesive focus and their “multivocality”

The use of symbols in worship has not been a strong feature of Baptist identity. Many would not even be comfortable with a cross on the wall of the Church, preferring just a text from Scripture (this in itself a symbol!). However, the two sacraments of believer’s Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are very powerful symbols to Baptist believers.

e. **Ritual - both repetitive action and “liminality”**

This is not a familiar concept among Baptists, who tend to steer clear of anything that is repetitive. However, it could be argued that although not explicit, there are certain implicit rituals in local congregations, for example seating allocation in certain Churches.

f. **Demography**

In the past, the Baptist Union of Southern Africa has largely represented the white people. The leadership was mostly male, and middle aged. But in recent years the demography of the nation has changed radically, but this has not really impacted on the local church to the same extent as yet.

g. **Character - its characteristic traits and the sense of “having character” that chooses the way of difficult adaptation.**

Character, says Carroll et al, (1986:43) expresses the moral dimension of congregational life, its values, behaviour, its ethos and integrity. It is quite difficult to objective in this aspect of identity, but in the major crises and turning points of denominational and local Church life. The impression gained is that the Baptist denomination has maintained a godly character, and Christlike qualities.

The issue of identity is that a congregation is both in a state of “being” (its present state) and “becoming” (its transformative function). I think that these two modalities should not be too far apart or you will have a state of incongruence. The Latin phrase: “*Christianus est in fieri*” - *To be a Christian is to be in the making*” is true of us individually and corporately. Identity has a dynamic nature.

2.5 ATTEMPTS AT SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PASTORAL TERMINATION

There are a number of programs that have been developed to try to help with the problem of pastoral termination. At present further ongoing empirical research is being undertaken in the Southern Baptist Convention to determine whether the problem has grown since 1988. Two significant efforts are listed below:

2.5.1 THE LEADER CARE PROGRAMME

Leader Care is a programme designed by the Sunday School Board in Nashville, headed by Brooks Faulkner and 6 staff to assist in the area of forced termination. Their effort is aimed at:

- a. Prevention of termination through educating Pastors and Church staff
- b. Intervention in a crisis situation through a "911" hotline. To give Pastors and their families an emergency resource. Conflict mediation, arbitration and counselling are all part of the programme.
- c. Restoration of Pastors to the ministry, or to another vocation for those who have failed is the third aspect of this programme.

The interesting aspect of this programme is that Faulkner's consulting staff is divided in different avenues of help:

- i. Vocational guidance, for Ministers' family and Wives issues
- ii. Women in Church staff leadership
- iii. Third party mediation and personal and professional growth
- iv. Physical fitness and nutrition

This last aspect concerns the well-being of the minister and his family, and the possibility of further research into the correlation between "Physical fitness, nutrition and efficacy in ministry" is one that may require further research.

Faulkner and his staff have undertaken empirical research into the issue of forced termination in the Southern Baptist Convention, using the facilities available through the Sunday School Board.

On Faulkner's staff is Norris Smith. He has written a number of articles on pastoral termination, mostly under the subject of "forced termination", with the primary focus being the impact on the Pastor, his family and life.

2.5.2.2 THE ANTIOCH AFFECTION PROGRAMME

Another programme dealing with the issue of "forced termination" is called the Antioch Affection. Referring to the account in the Book of Acts where the Local Church at Antioch took up a special offering to help care for the need of the Church at Jerusalem.

This programme, under the leadership of Rev. Bob Anderson, a former Baptist Pastor, who resigned from Parkview Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to head up the ministry, uses Parkview Church as a "refuge" for those who faced "termination". He takes terminated Pastors onto his staff, with an agreement from the Church that had terminated their Pastor that they would continue to pay the salary for 6 months.

He seeks to restore these hurting Pastors, using a "Barnabas-Saul" type of relationship, where the terminated Pastor would be given a "paper class" to teach in Sunday school and enrolled at Southwestern Seminary in courses on conflict management, personal communication skills and husband/wife relationship issues. Housing too is provided for at Southwestern.

The use of their term "paper class" is the key issue here. A "paper class" is a group of potential students. It is a class that exists only on paper, the idea being that if someone would make the effort to get the people to respond they would form a support group for the terminated Pastor, both spiritually and financially. The onus is on the terminated Pastor to go and get the class up and running. The class would contribute \$20 each to the salary of the terminated Pastor, as well as the 6 month stipend from the previous Church.

At this time of research it remains to be seen whether this plan will work in practice.

Both programs I have mentioned above deal with the matter of the Pastor, his family and his recovery, but they fail to address the fundamental issue of pastoral termination. These programs are good in themselves, but merely act as a net which attempts to catch the hurting Pastors and their families before they fall through the system. Little work I have discovered has been focussed on the Churches themselves, except in the area of how ethically to terminate the Pastor.

The growing problem of "forced termination" in the '80's caused some empirical research to be undertaken in this area by J Clifford Tharp Jr., a Research Associate in the Office of Planning in the Southern Baptist Convention. Another survey was undertaken by the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1988. As a result of this, the Fall 1990 issue of "Search" Magazine, a professional journal for Southern Baptist Pastors and staff dealt with the issue of "Forced Termination". Faulkner and Norris Smith along with other writers contributed articles dealing with subjects such as:

- a. The Scope of the Problem
- b. The History of the Problem
- c. Conflict Ministry and Forced Termination
- d. Emotional Factors in Forced Termination

In the course of time, with the persistence of the problem, the Baptist Church periodical called "Church Administration" gave a whole issue to the problem of "forced termination". It was also covered in the February 1997 issue of Youth Ministry, and from the point of view of helping the leader in the Local Church deal with the issue, Smith, B. (1992) has an article in Search magazine addressing the problem of pastoral termination from the point of view of the Deacons in Churches, helping them to deal ethically with the issue of pastoral termination.

In my opinion, the weight of work coming from the Sunday School Board and the Leader Care programme has been focussed on educating the clergy mostly, without sufficient emphasis on the people who make up the membership of Baptist Churches, especially those called to hold the office of Deacon and elder, as these are the people who are involved in the actual pastoral termination. The weight of literature deals with the Pastor, and his family, but my research has not uncovered any help for the local church which suffers as a result of this trauma.

The research in South Africa sought to discover the impact upon the local Church as a result of their experience of pastoral termination.

Cramb, (1996) has completed a doctoral thesis on the issue of accreditation and accountability among Australian Baptists in the territory of Queensland. Baptist Churches in that area (totalling 160) face similar problems to us here in South Africa, and a number of issues are raised in this work which influenced the research. In the abstract of his thesis (1996:3) he states:

"Considerable dissatisfaction with selection processes has been expressed by leaders and candidates alike."

Accreditation is an area of flawed praxis and Cramb's work deals with the processes and procedures, relevant to a person entering into Baptist ministry.

In conclusion, it seems as if the Southern Baptist Convention, which by far has the majority of Baptist Ministers around the world has focussed mainly on the helping of Pastors "after the fact". Much more needs to be done in the area of educating Pastors and members of Churches, especially leaders, in the area of conflict management, and autonomy.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research was done among Churches in membership with the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, from whom men had terminated or had been forced to terminate their ministry to take up secular employment during the last 16 years. This is the time frame that I have been a fully accredited minister of this denomination.

My first step was to “surf” on the Internet, to attempt to network with other individuals and groups that were involved in the area of pastoral termination. After establishing contacts within the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA, and in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, where there are significant numbers of Baptists, I began to access information regarding the extent of the problem.

The second step was to assemble sources of information and literature on pastoral termination before beginning any empirical study of my own.

The third step taken towards identifying the problem of the Exodus of Baptist Pastors was to organise and collate information gleaned from the Baptist Union Handbooks for the last 16 years. This information is presented in Tables 1 and 2, and it gave an indication of the extent of the problem. From this, work on the empirical research began.

3.1.1 CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

My decision to interview the Churches and not the terminated Pastors themselves was based on the following reasons:

- a. I reasoned that men who have resigned from Pastoral ministry would be reluctant to participate in a study that will reflect on their perceived “failure”.
- b. In much the same way, the Baptist Union Executive is a “closed book” when it comes to speaking about past failures. One ex-Executive member confided that “the biggest mistake of his whole ministry” was the way in which he had dealt with the conflict and

resignation of the Pastor of one of the Churches in the research. Another member, when asked, in a conflict situation, where, in their opinion, did the interest of the Executive lie, either the Pastor, or the Church, I was told that it was neither. They were more interested in the ownership of the property of the Church, and that property remaining in the Baptist denomination's hands.

- c. The "engine room" of our denomination is the local group of believers, called the local Church, and these believers have, after prayerful consideration, elected men and women to act as their deaconate or Church council to guide them in matters of faith and discipline. It is the opinion of this group of people, which I believe will also reflect the opinion of the Church they represent, that empirical research was done.
- d. In modern trends in a practical theological ecclesiology, the focus has shifted from the Pastor to the congregation, and so, practical theological ecclesiology, though in its infancy, is concerned with the functioning of the local Church through its congregation. It is important focus on local Baptist congregations, and the impact of resignations upon the congregation, rather than upon the Pastors. That remains for other researchers to explore.

However, it became clear as the research sought to explore this phenomenon that the Pastors too might want to speak to the matter, and I made the decision, where possible to interview at least some of the men that had resigned from these Churches to hear their opinion. These I have included and alluded to personal conversations with them in the course of the dissertation.

Because of the relatively small size of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (the population), It is possible to develop close relationships with the leadership of a number of Churches that have experienced termination of their Pastor, and I have a credibility as a Baptist Pastor of some 16 years standing within the denomination, which benefited the research.

From the perspective of the research, one would think that any attempt to raise issues which may bring healing to Churches that have suffered as a result of the termination of their pastor, would cause the leadership of the Churches to respond positively, and draw out the best leadership that the Church could offer, but out of the 8 churches interviewed, 2 of them displayed a remarkable disinterest in the subject of their own Church's problems. One Church (A) has a history of Pastor's resigning, and the ethos of the interview was sombre. The other in an Afrikaans community, there was a hesitancy to speak about what had happened in the past, especially about the termination of the Pastor. He was perceived to be the one who preached the Word of God to the people and

represented Christ. Both the person and his position were not seen as a matter of scrutiny. "God would be his only judge" was the statement, based on their world view of the Pastor and the pastoral office.

In this interview, the most senior leader never arrived at the meeting as he was playing squash!

Pastoral resignations happen all the time. Ideally in the "call system" which is in operation within the Baptist denomination, a couple feel that their work in one Church is finished and they receive a "call" from another Church and after prayerfully considering the matter, they move on.

When a couple resign, with no prospect of employment, and with the feeling that they have been let down and polarised, it points to flawed praxis. The purpose of this qualitative research, is to examine the phenomena and to identify some of the key concepts in the process.

3.1.2 AN ARTISTIC APPROACH TO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Early in the theoretical stage of this study, I came across an older article by Eisner, (1981) which describes a different approach to qualitative research, which he calls an "artistic" approach, as opposed to a scientific approach. He claims that it allows the researcher a greater degree of license in research. He argues that although we must use scientific criteria based on facts deduced by empirical research, it is the nature of qualitative research to encourage and develop an inventiveness and personal interpretation in the process of theory development. If this is the case, then we must expect liberties to be taken, in what has been called in the past in other disciplines, "artistic license".

Eisner states that in an artistic approach to qualitative research, liberties in portrayal are wider than in scientific studies, and it exploits the potential of selectivity, so that the researcher can say what needs to be said as he sees it.

In 1981, when Eisner wrote this article he points to a neologism created to describe the new genre of research, called "faction" -which he describes as the marriage of fact and fiction in which there should be a union between the observable evidence (observable behaviour) and the researchers understanding and meaning attached to that behaviour.

For 15 years I have heard much criticism about the way situations have been handled. It is not possible as a researcher to be completely objectively detached from the phenomena.

What will the research accomplish? At this point I don't think it is possible to predict the implications of the research for praxis in any detailed way. Rather, I think that these will emerge as time goes by and the findings are made known. Many Pastors, in conversation, have expressed an interest in seeing the outcome of this study, and only then will the implications be seen more clearly. However, it is my intention that the praxis of our churches and denomination in dealing with pastoral resignation should be transformed as it moves in the direction of the theological ideal. Do we need new structures? Is this area of Baptist Church life receiving enough attention? Are Churches aware of the extent of the problem and able to cope with it? These questions must encourage us to ask "What can be done?".

I consider Eisner's approach to research strategy to be similar to Mason's (1996:109) reflexive reading of the data.

In seeking to understand something of the structures of the Baptist Union, I am attempting to understand the relationship and interaction between the termination of Pastors, the Churches and the Baptist Union, especially as it relates to the matter of autonomy and accountability.

Through the use of tables, I have sought to demonstrate distinctions like duration and frequency. Although not part of this particular research project, the statistics related to Pastors leaving the ministry for overseas touches on the distinction Van der Ven (1993:161), calls "range". Some of the Pastors who have successfully moved to the USA and other parts of the world have certainly introduced a mixture of direct and indirect influences on the lives of other Pastors still here in South Africa, who observe the successfulness of their endeavour.

In an interview it was stated that the men usually sent by the denomination to assist in the area of conflict resolution and management had attended a "couple of workshops", and the interviewee knew of a "couple of books" on the subject. It was more the recognition by the denomination that their representative in handling conflict should have "a spirit of grace". Surely this should be accompanied by some knowledge on the theory of conflict, and the ability to arbitrate, and some experience on the matter. I think that leaders have no problem with "flawed knowledge", but perhaps more with flawed praxis.

I believe that a qualitative approach to research gives the researcher the freedom to utilise observable evidence i.e. focus group interviews, and couple this with personal interpretation and understanding as Eisner states.

3.2 THE METHOD BEHIND THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

This section deals with “how” the empirical research was undertaken.

3.2.1 DETERMINING THE SAMPLE POPULATION

It was relatively simple, but time consuming exercise to identify the sample from the Baptist Union official handbook published annually. The Pastors who had terminated were listed in each year book under the heading of ministerial movements. Further investigation in the Handbook lists of ministers and Churches, and the minutes of the assembly discussion helped me to discover the names of the Churches from which these Pastors were terminated, and who had gone into secular employment.

I phoned the current Pastor of the Church, from which a previous Pastor had resigned to go into secular employment, to gain his permission for the project, and for his approval for interviewing the Church Council (or part thereof) during the time when the previous Pastor had resigned.

From the initial hesitation in the first few calls, I soon learned to explain that I was doing exploratory research and my sole purpose for the interview was academic, and that I had no intention of “stirring up trouble”.

I discussed with the current Pastors of the Churches the possibility that the interview might have a redemptive purpose, especially in smaller churches, where there is a much closer sense of community, and some of them confided in me that there were still some strong feelings in the Church over the matter of the previous Pastor’s termination and some asked if they might be present during the “focus group” interview. I agreed to this and decided to offer all the current Pastors the opportunity to attend. At the end of the day only in two interviews did the existing Pastor attend. However the fact that “strong feelings” were mentioned gave me a clue to the impact of forced termination upon the church.

I explained that it would take about one hour, and made the appropriate appointments, explaining that complete confidentiality would be given to the interview and that I would make the findings available to them at the end should they wish. Churches were selected on the simple criteria of the men who had been terminated in that geographical area, plus their proximity to where the researcher now resides.

- a. **Church A** - a 22 member suburban Church in a mostly blue-collar area. A history of terminations and financial problems. Not involved in associational denominational life to any great degree. There is a noticeable hesitation on the part of Pastors to want to accept a call to go to this Church.
- b. **Church B** - a 207 member, small town Church which has a history of good leadership and sound finances. Mostly retired people attend this Church. They are not involved in the denominational life, except for attendance at an occasional meeting. The Church has a multi-Pastor staff.
- c. **Church C** - a 56 member Church which competes with Church A for membership. A poorer, blue collar community. The Church has had a heritage of great Pastors, but has suffered badly through pastoral termination. Many members have left the Church. The history of the Church has been affected by the transient population, who have sought low-cost housing in the area, then when they have more finance, they have moved to more affluent suburbs.
- d. **Church D** - a 71 member, small town Church, with a dying industry in an Afrikaans community. The membership of the Church is mostly white conservative, middle-class Afrikaners, and the make-up of the town is changing to black transient labourers.
- e. **Church E** - a 32 member Church, surrounded by much larger and more viable Baptist Churches in close proximity. This Church is in a small Afrikaans community, and struggles financially. It is mostly supported through one or two businessmen in the Church.
- f. **Church F** - a 242 member small town Church which plays an important part in denominational life. The Church has a stable history and consists of mainly white collar people. It has had strong leadership, and has a strong financial base. It moved out of the central business area into the suburbs, and has grown well as a result of this move.
- g. **Church G** - a 55 member Church with a history of problems, but a great heritage of Church planting. This small town church attracted many dissenters from other Churches who had different views of Church structure and identity

to Baptists. They formed a large pressure group and caused a lot of trouble. In the course of the forced termination of the previous Pastor, the pressure group also left, and the Church has been reduced to a small membership that struggles financially. The Church is poorly positioned, and has discussed moving out of the town into the suburbs.

- h. **Church H** - a 174 member stable small town Church with a middle to upper middle class white collar congregation, and a large number of students. The Church has had a very stable history, and has maintained a steady growth pattern over the years of its existence.

Resistance was encountered from the 2 Afrikaans Baptist Churches that were contacted that had terminated Pastors. The current Pastor of one told me, "there is still a lot of pain in my Church", and because he has only recently arrived at that Church, I decided not to put undue pressure on him to conduct the interview. Members of the other Church said that they had "forgiven the Pastor and they had nothing more to say".

I was interested whether the feelings in a predominantly Afrikaans community were that the matter of the Pastor leaving was not a matter to be discussed at all.

In Church E, a Church of mainly Afrikaans-speaking members, the feeling was that they wanted to let "bygones be bygones". However, it was not possible to determine whether this Afrikaans speaking section of the population had a different perspective on pastoral termination, than the other English speaking segment.

Church F told me that they would allow me to meet with their 2 elders as they were the only ones who took care of the "spiritual" affairs of the Church, and these matters were not the concern of the deaconate.

I interviewed the Church Council's of 8 Baptist Churches which have, in the last 15 years, had to face the issue of their Pastor resigning, and who had gone to business, or some other employment, as a result of a moral issue, a conflict issue, a theological/ecclesiological issue, a social issue, or a financial problem.

3.2.2 CHOICE OF INTERVIEW METHOD

The interviews were conducted in a "focus group" (Patton, 1990:335) format. This method

is described as a small group of people assembled to discuss a specific topic. Those who participate hear the responses of the others and are able to respond in a sort of "quality control". It also enables the researcher to get responses from more people from the same time period. The result of interactions with the group of leaders enabled me to record the response to the questions, by one member of the group, and then to record the other members' input.

One of the advantages of a "focus group" is that they are conducted by people who are familiar with each other, and I found this to be the case. Whereas on the one part I knew the Pastors of the Churches, I knew very few of the people making up the leadership. But they felt comfortable with each other, and were happy to share their feelings in the familiar surroundings of one member's home, and with mostly familiar people. The only problem encountered initially, was in the situation where a subterranean Pastor was present in the interview, they tended to dominate the conversation, and unless the others were asked specifically for their opinions they never volunteered the information, but were content to let one person speak for the group. The concept of "subterranean Pastors" I will deal with in another section.

In a semi-structured format, using a qualitative approach, questions were prepared to be used as an interview guide (Appendix 2) for the discussion, but the focus group determined its own agenda on that aspect of pastoral termination that affected them the most. Most of the questions were dealt with in each interview.

The problem of Pastors leaving the ministry happens in a social context. One of the problems for some Pastors who have left the ministry is that the "water has been poisoned" so to speak, and they have nothing good to say about those individuals in denominational leadership who were involved in the dispute or crisis that led to their resignation. Also, it might conceivably be true that certain churches historically do not have such close ties with the Baptist denomination as others, for example Die Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk, which has kept a vacillating relationship within the Baptist Union.

3.2.3 THE PILOT STUDY

The Pilot Study was undertaken at a small suburban Church with the focus group consisting of the whole leadership (4 members, 3 men and one lady) with the current Pastor present. They had just completed their monthly deacons' meeting and I joined them at 8.30 p.m. on a Monday evening, after having got lost in their area for about 15 minutes.

After thanking them for the opportunity to meet with them, I explained the nature of the study, and assured them on the matter of confidentiality.

Their posture and body language indicated that they were in a relaxed frame of mind, although the Pastor felt a little threatened by the unfolding scenario, as was indicated by his early comments and discussion, but he too, began to feel at ease as the conversation progressed.

The first question posed to them was, "What do you as the leaders and representatives of the Church feel about the matter of the Pastor resigning?" The intention was that this would address the issue of the "impact" of pastoral termination on the life of the Church. The immediate response from Person A was "Tragic!" And in the course of the elaboration of this comment it became clear that pastoral termination was an all-too-familiar scenario for this Church.

The Pilot Study Church, being a small church had a great financial burden, and they had high expectations of their Pastor to build the membership in a short period of time. The Church had a small investment, which they used month by month to supplement his salary, and as the investment came to an end, so did the Pastor's ministry.

As the interview unfolded, so it became obvious that here was a situation, where a subterranean Pastor existed. This became clear when a question was asked, the others in the group would wait to see what the subterranean Pastor's response was first, then they would elaborate on that. In order to get a broader picture, I began to ask direct questions to all the individuals present at the interview.

It transpired that after a significant number of months serving the Church in a bi-vocational ministry, the subterranean Pastor felt that the Pastor's "job description" needed to be changed.

The subterranean Pastor initiated steps to write out a further job description for the Pastor with the approval, it was added, of the rest of the deaconate, and some input from the Baptist Union, who I am sure were unaware of the unfolding of events in the Church at this stage. This job description, I was told was to be very detailed, outlining the further responsibilities of the Pastor for the future. It was not long after the presentation of this to the Pastor that he resigned. My initial reaction to this was simply that it was at best a *faux pas* on the part of the leadership, until I discovered that there were other factors that influenced the situation as a sort of "hidden agenda".

Person B then told the Interviewer that there had been some relationship problems between the Pastor's wife and Person A. It seemed clear to me that the "issue" over which the Pastor had resigned had been manipulated by the subterranean Pastor, because of the conflict with the Pastor's wife. For the researcher, this raised the matter of accountability, and the issue of whether we expect a Pastor to have a higher concept of accountability than the people in the congregation. The Pastor

is called to lead or at least manage the congregation, and implicit in that calling is an authority that comes with the position. However in Church A, the subterranean Pastor was seen to be a type of anchor among the other leaders and Pastors who had come and gone.

The concept of accountability was nowhere present in this interview. The people of this small Church had brought their terminated Pastor a great distance at a heavy cost for a short term ministry. The situation might have been resolved if it were not for the conflict between the Pastor's wife and the subterranean Pastor in the Church. Changing the terms of a Pastor's call in my opinion is a moral issue for which no one was held accountable, and not long after the termination of the Pastor, the next pastor stepped into the situation.

3.2.4 PROBLEMS WITH METHOD

During the Pilot Study, problems relating to method were sorted out. Mostly related to equipment, and the time factor needed for travel. One of the major problems encountered was the transcribing of the interviews, and far too little emphasis on the labour required for this task was given by the researcher. For a one hour tape to be transcribed required approximately two and a half hours of writing out the notes then a further hour for typing and checking. This was a huge task, and not possible for one person to complete. The transcripts are available from the researcher.

3.2.5 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGY USED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

I think that history is an important aspect of my research as it traces the chronology of the research and gives an understanding of the introduction to the unanticipated forms of data. Also it gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the data literally.

My first "focus group" interview with Church "A", was on the 27th July at 8.30 p.m. in the evening, at the home of one of the deaconate, after they had finished a deacons' meeting. Present was the current Pastor, and the 3 members of the Church deaconate, (the full deaconate).

The Church is a small, struggling work, with a history of resigned Pastors. The mood at the meeting was sombre and somewhat negative. Initially, logistical problems relating to the use and competency of the recording device were encountered, this only proved to be a major problem later when the actual transcribing of the interview took place.

Before switching on the tape, I explained who I was, and the purpose of the interview, and the fact that the target group was the academic community. I assured them of confidentiality and

Before switching on the tape, I explained who I was, and the purpose of the interview, and the fact that the target group was the academic community. I assured them of confidentiality and thanked them for their time, indicating that we would not go on for longer than 75 minutes.

I explained that my research had shown that a significant number of men had left the ministry over the past 15 years, gave them the figures, and reminding them that they too had experienced the resignation of their Pastor, and then asked them the first question on my Interview Guide, namely, "What do you as leaders and representatives of this Church feel about this matter?"

It never occurred to me that the existing Pastor, who was present on this occasion might use this Interview as an opportunity to "score some personal points" with the deaconate, but it became obvious that unless I directed my questions directly to one person, the Pastor would volunteer information. I changed my approach slightly to include all those present at the meeting to elicit information, by asking their personal opinion on the matter.

In the interview it became obvious that one person was the subterranean Pastor, not only by the quantity of discussion that the person gave, but also the quality.

As the interview progressed, it became clear that the subterranean Pastor had manipulated events that had led to the resignation of the Pastor. This I have outlined more clearly under 3.2.3.

Only at the end of the meeting was it explicitly stated by one of the deaconate that the subterranean Pastor (in this case a woman) had a "fall-out" with the terminated Pastor's wife, and in their opinion this might have led to the resignation.

After addressing the logistical elements of the interview, and obtaining proper equipment. I had arranged for a 3 day break before continuing with the rest of the interviews. The purpose of this was to give me time to reflect on my own skills and adapt or change the interview guide.

The second and third interviews were conducted on July 30th, 1998, one in the afternoon, and one in the evening.

Church "B" is a large church with a multi-staff leadership. Present at the meeting were the 3 "senior leaders" of the Church. The issue at stake here was the resignation of one of the staff, and not the "senior Pastor".

During this interview (which ran very smoothly) it became apparent that some criticism was

being levelled at the process of accreditation and ordination of Pastors, and the whole issue of the training of men, and their suitability for Baptist ministry came into question. I made field notes to contact the Principal of the Baptist Theological College in Randburg to interview him on this matter.

Church "C" had a poor record with regard to its previous Pastors. Some had resigned, one had stolen money, one had split the church theologically. Many members had left the Church. Present at the meeting, which took place at 7.30 p.m. on the evening of 30th July was the existing Pastor, 2 members of the existing deaconate, and one ex-deacon who had left the Church because of the terminated Pastor's actions.

This was a very interesting interview, in the sense that there was a "redemptive" agenda on the part of the Pastor, and although the purpose of the meeting was for research, I allowed some conversation to take place between the existing Pastor and the man who had left the Church. It was actually quite a sensitive moment as I reflect upon it now, when the member who had resigned because of the hurt caused by the Pastor who had resigned shared his feelings.

The impression gained in this Church was one of being "left alone out in the wilderness". I made a decision at this meeting to interview the General Secretary of the Baptist Union to discover how the Executive felt about the matter of Pastors resigning.

My next Interviews took place on the Reef.

Firstly, with the Principal of one of our theological Colleges, and then secondly with the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. The input from these interviews I will deal with in other sections of the thesis.

Church "D" was interviewed at 7.00 p.m. on the evening of 3rd August in Gauteng. The Pastor had planned the meeting well. He informed me that he would not be present at the meeting, and I waited with him for the people to arrive. Only a husband and wife couple showed up, the others did not, and they did not offer any explanation or apology. I decided to press on with the interview, and although it became clear that this was not really a "quality" type of interview, it probably helped the couple to deal with a lot of issues that had bothered them regarding how the termination of their Pastor was dealt with.

An appointment for an interview was made with an important member of the Baptist Union Executive to ask information and get some feedback on this matter. It was cancelled 3 hours before by his secretary due to the person being ill.

Church "E" was a rural church, and the interview was held on the 4th August, 1998 at 6.30 p.m. Present were 2 men, who are regarded as "elders" in the church, though they do not have the title. During this interview it again became apparent that the problem with the resignation of the Pastor had impacted negatively upon the Church and caused it to have a poor image among the Pastors of the Baptist Union, and since the Pastor's resignation 4 years previously, there was a hesitancy from Baptist Ministers to even want to consider a "call" to the Church.

Church "F" was interviewed on the 5th August 1998, it is a very influential town church, with a high profile. The meeting was attended by the elder and a senior deacon, at 6.00 p.m. in the evening. The issue of the Pastors resignation was a moral one, with the Pastor only having been in the Church for a short period. I was interested in the impact that this resignation had upon the life and witness of the Church, and pursued that direction more in this interview, as this was indeed a high profile incident.

Church "G" was also interviewed on the 5th August, 1998 at 8.00 p.m. in the evening in Gauteng. The resignation of their Pastor was a "messy" affair, which they felt was not handled correctly by the Officials of the Baptist Union Executive. The Church has not recovered from this trauma, in spite of having a new Pastor. Again, the mood of the meeting was quite sombre. The impact of pastoral resignation upon the Churches became more and more evident, and the feeling by some that they were left out in the cold by the Baptist Union.

Church "H" was interviewed on 26th August 1998 at 1.00 p.m. in KwaZulu-Natal. Present was the current Pastor and the official elders of the church. This is a multi-staffed Church and the Pastor who resigned was not the senior Pastor. This interview again highlighted the suitability of candidates for ministry, and it soon became obvious that the person who eventually resigned wasn't really suited for ministry, and the Church established a committee to deal with the matter. After approximately 3 years the Pastor resigned and the church wasn't really affected by the resignation. They did make attempts to have a redemptive ministry to the Pastor, and the relationships, although strained are congenial.

I have also sought to elicit responses from colleagues who have been Presidents of the Baptist Union in the past, or who serve as lecturers and theologians at our Colleges. I sent them my research proposal and asked for their response to it.

Person "1" - a past President of the Baptist Union, sent the proposal back with corrections to my English grammar only

Person "2" - Sent back a reply mostly justifying and defending the actions of the Baptist Union executive, with a few brief comments of no real worth.

Person "3" - A theologian and Pastor gave me very constructive advice which is contained in the thesis, and some valuable encouragement.

Person "4"- Did not have the courtesy to reply at all.

3.2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Trying to make sense of the multiplicity of data is what Mason (1996:107) calls sorting, indexing and categorising the data. This involves reading the data, and Mason (1996:109) discusses three different ways of doing this. First of all there is a **literal reading** of the data, where content, structure, style and layout is examined. In the transcripts of the interviews, I examined the words that were used and the sequence in which the people spoke. Secondly, there is an **interpretative reading** of the data, which involves attaching meaning to the information, and making sense of it, asking what knowledge it represents. Finally, there is a **reflexive reading** of the data, which locates the researcher as part of the data that is generated.

My first step in the process involves what Mason (1996:109) calls an interpretative reading of the data as it relates to:

- a. The impact of pastoral termination upon the local Church.
- b. The matter of autonomy and accountability.
- c. The existence of subterranean Pastors.

The interpretive reading of the data enables the researcher to understand how people make sense of the problem of pastoral termination, so it involves reading "beyond" the data.

By "comparing" (Mason, 1996:137) the impact of the pastoral termination in each of the interviews, it will be possible to make sense of the data, and draw out some conclusions.

How clearly they were able to see the problem coming. In terms of the Church's life - how seriously it was affected by the Pastor's resignation, and the answer to Question 7 directly relates to whether this was a "learning" experience for the Church. From the research it was clear that some Churches have entrenched methods of dealing with problems relating to the Pastor resigning, which they would not change.

The identification of subterranean Pastors from the data will involve a descriptive explanation of the data (Mason, 1996:137).

Faulkner (1986:14), describes some of the attributes of a subterranean Pastor, and I will apply these to the interviews, plus my knowledge of group dynamics, and the ability I had to reflect and make field notes during the interviews.

A "reflexive" reading of the data (Mason, 1996:109) enables the researcher to be involved personally as a part of the data. This is closely linked to Eisner's "artistic" approach to qualitative research which is covered in 3.1.

Each of the interviews presented a redemptive opportunity to demonstrate care and concern over what they, as a Church had been through. One of the churches had earned a bad reputation, and had not had the opportunity to speak to a Baptist Pastor openly about this matter for years. I found it too easy to involve myself in the interview, because in most cases I was known personally by the interviewees.

During the course of the Interviews, and in casual discussion afterwards, it became clear to me that the general opinion regarding pastors leaving the ministry was that the Baptist Union should be far more selective in accrediting its pastors and putting them onto their "ministerial lists". Two important "spin-off" interviews resulted. One with the principal of one of the training colleges, and the other with the General Secretary of the Baptist Union. The discussions focussed on redemptive options to the problem of Pastors leaving the denomination.

In order that I might present some currently relevant statistics, I took the Baptist Union Handbook and went through each persons name, and their tenure in each church they served. I then averaged it out to discover an important statistic, namely length of tenure in South African Baptist Churches. This had been a factor in forced termination in the Southern Baptist Convention, and although not as important as other factors, it introduced interesting comparisons.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

4.1 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA ACCORDING TO INDEXING CATEGORIES

Qualitative researchers examine, among other things, “flawed praxis” and address intellectual puzzles (Mason, 1996:135). This chapter deals with what the research is all about, and the “new” information” that a researcher wishes to discover on a subject. In that sense this is the “heart” of this dissertation.

The referencing system I have used in this chapter describes firstly which Church was interviewed, then the page number in the transcript, and finally the paragraph number. For example: (C.3.6) would mean interview with Church C, page 3 of the transcript, and the third paragraph on that page.

4.1.1 THE IMPACT OF PASTORAL TERMINATION ON THE LOCAL CHURCH

As an introduction to each interview, the researcher gave the statistics in Table 1 and 2 as background, then the focus group was reminded that they had experienced first hand the problem of pastoral termination. The first question in the interview guide was, “What do you as leaders and representatives of the Church feel about this matter?” This question seeks to understand and explore the impact of pastoral termination upon the local Church.

In the research, Church B had not, in their own words, “recovered from the problem” after 5 years. Church C had not recovered after 8 years. In Church D, it was stated during the interview (D.3.6) that for the past 10 years the Church had struggled with the whole process of calling a Pastor. The impact of having previous Pastors terminated, had influenced those who would normally be available for a call from considering coming to that Church.

In 3 of the interviews, there was a negative perception regarding calls to those Churches by Pastors in the denomination. One person commented that upon enquiring whether an individual was available for a call to their Church, the reply was, “thanks for messing up my life” (C.6.9). Another Pastor refused even to consider the call until more time had elapsed, so that healing could take place.

This highlights the destructive nature of conflict, and in this matter, Van der Ven, (1993:279) says that conflict is often viewed by the local Church as destructive only, and placed in a negative light. But conflict can also be constructive in the sense that it focuses the Church's attention on problem solving skills, and can increase the cohesion, co-ordination and co-operation in a congregation. The interpretation of conflict as either constructive or destructive depends on a number of criteria. One of those being a perception by the majority that all conflict is bad, no matter what the outcome. Secondly, the intensity of the conflict is a factor which will determine its usefulness, and thirdly the stability of the congregation in which the conflict takes place is a factor which will affect the perception.

Church C definitely saw the terminated Pastor as the one who sought to destroy the unity that existed in the Church, and was blamed in the interview for a tactic of "seeking out and destroying" members whom he did not like. In this interview, I had the advantage of having present one of the people that had left the Church before the Pastor resigned. I was able to confirm Van der Ven's statement regarding the perception that the initiator of conflict is viewed as the "violation of unity". The Church saw itself as being "alright" before the ministry of the terminated Pastor, and was unable to get back to where it once was.

The comments in 5 of the interviews regarding how people felt about the matter of pastoral termination were very negative, even intense. Comments ranged from, "a very sad situation" (C.1.2), "a concern", (F.1.3), "it is sad, very sad", (H.1.6), "totally wrong", (G.1.12) and "tragic" (A.1.4).

One Church which had not been successful in calling a new Pastor, had been laughed at on the phone by Pastors of other Churches, whom they sought to call. The Church's perception was that Pastors had spoken about how bad the Church was, and were thus hesitant to go there.

Other Churches felt frustrated and upset, another struggled to forgive the Denomination's Executive for the way they handled the situation.

The termination of the Pastor had affected the financial situation of the Church, in some cases severely. Church A related that their finances had always been on a "roller coaster" (A.4.19), but any money they had, even in savings was used to pay the Pastor a salary. At Church E, there was a history of financial difficulties (R.2.2). In Church D's community, the financial giving of the Church was indirectly tied to them having a Pastor (D.6.2). During the interregnum, people stopped attending, and thus the giving to the Church dropped. Two of the Churches commented that the termination of the Pastor had no financial impact on the Church.

The impact on the life and witness of the Church was discovered, when in the interview with Church A, they declared that if this phenomenon happened again, they would close the Church and join elsewhere (A.5.16). Yet in spite of "reaching the end of the road", they have failed to look at the matter of leadership and conflict, and expect every Pastor to adapt to fit into their climate of leadership. In Church C, (C.5.4) members clearly stated that they had been through enough of pastoral termination, and if it were to happen again, they would simply resign and go to the nearest Church. The resignation of members was seen to be a significant result of pastoral termination. Church B (B.3.9), said they had experienced this and Church C (C.2.8), said they lost about 40 members as a result of the process of termination and the way it was dealt with. At Church E, there was a continual cycle of building up the Church, then the Pastor leaving and attendance dropping. This in itself underscores the impact of termination, but it is also significant to note the ages that people noticeably left the Church. Churches A, B, G and H (e.g. A.4.16), all stated without being asked specifically that they had lost significant numbers of young people during the problem.

Furthermore, concerning the issue of "impact" there was certainly a sense of a poor "self image" expressed on the part of 5 of the Churches. A member of Church A's focus group described their Church as a "backwater Church" (A.6.14). In Church D, there was clearly the feeling that no Pastor wanted to go there. In Churches E and G there was certainly an air that they were struggling to survive.

At Churches H and F, it came out clearly that the problem of pastoral termination had the potential to split the church, especially when the termination was the result of a serious conflict and people became polarised and chose sides. (e.g. H.3.4). This was very much in evidence in Church B, where there was conflict on the pastoral staff.

An interesting aspect concerning the issue of the impact of pastoral termination in Church C, was that it was accompanied by a theological paradigm shift from "reformed" to "charismatic", and then back again! Previously, another Pastor had attempted to change the identity of the Church but had failed and had terminated his ministry in the Church, and the second time the termination had led to a loss of approximately a third of the Church members.

Concerning the impact of pastoral termination, it was important for me to note that it affected long-standing friendships in the community, as people took sides, when there was conflict. In one interview (C.6.1), one of the members of the focus group remarked that as a result of the impact of the termination of the Pastor, and the "devastation" it caused, he ceased going to Church for six to eight months. Others that I have spoken with prior to this research project have vowed that they would never set foot in a Baptist Church again.

In the research, it came across clearly that there were certain types of personalities that were manifestly unsuitable for pastoral ministry, but who may fit into other avenues of Christian ministry. (B.1.4. and M.1.5. and R.1.3. and F.7.2. and S.1.6.). However, I did not seek to explore personality “types” or what the concept of “suitability for ministry” was in the research.

4.1.2 SUBTERRANEAN PASTORS

In Church F, during the interview, one of the people remarked that the terminated Pastor was under “Petticoat Government” (C.2.3) - a sexist phrase implying that it was the wife of the terminated Pastor that was perceived to either have the power, or be the problem. Again in Church G, it was the wife of the Pastor that was not considered suitable “pastoral material” and was the underlying reason for his demise. On a number of occasions, it was stated during interviews that confidences were not kept at leadership level and the spouses of the leaders were privy to sensitive, confidential matters. An interesting situation occurred in the interview with Church A in that a person I identify as a subterranean Pastor took it upon themselves to review the Pastor's job description in order to clarify his position. The subterranean Pastor had drawn up a detailed revised job description, and a meeting was held where the new job description was presented, and the Pastor resigned a few days later. I thought that this was an unusual state of affairs, as the pastor had been in the Church just over a year, and had settled into the ministry well.

After further questioning it was stated by one of the interviewees that differences of opinion had occurred between the subterranean Pastor and the terminated Pastor's wife at a ladies' meeting, and this was the real source of the problem. It only manifested itself with the issue of the job description.

During the interview, it became apparent that the other members of the focus group always waited for the subterranean Pastor to speak, or to hear what she had to say. I made field notes to analyse the transactions in the conversation, and as a result of counting the number of words spoken by each of the interviewees, I discovered:

a.	The researcher spoke	36%
b.	Person 1 spoke	2%
c.	Person 2 spoke	10%
d.	Person 3 spoke	10%
e.	Subterranean Pastor spoke	42%

Upon reflection and analysis, it was not that the person was just verbose, but rather, here was

a phenomenon of power and control. Discussion in the interview became a mostly two-sided affair, until I began to ask others specifically for their opinion on the matter.

In four of the interviews it was the perception of the focus group that the Pastor's wife, as the subterranean Pastor interfered and manipulated people in the Church, and was directly or indirectly the cause of his termination.

However, in the case of Churches F and H, it was my analysis of the situation that strong, godly leadership was being exercised by subterranean Pastors in trying to solve the difficulties that had led to pastoral termination. In both these instances, the subterranean Pastors had very demanding secular jobs plus other pressures, yet they managed to devote large amounts of time and energy in attempting to discover redemptive opportunities for their problem.

In Church H, the leadership of the Church had counselled with the terminated Pastor, whom they felt was not really suited for Pastoral work, and through the situation of forced termination, amicable relationships still developed. In Church F, the subterranean Pastors had faced a dilemma which was not dealt with in a way that Baptists perceive to be biblical by members of the executive of the Baptist Union, nor the previous Church. However, it is to their credit that they endeavoured to focus on putting the life of their Church back on track, and I believe that they have done so.

The constituency of the Baptist denomination has in itself led to some serious conflicts. For some reason, the Baptist faith has attracted some followers from the Plymouth Brethren. This was the case in Church G. The Plymouth Brethren Church structure does not permit the appointment of Pastors, but rather the "emergent leader" process features strongly. Elders are chosen from the body of the Church and have turns at meetings to bring a "word". Very much in evidence through the conflict and subsequent termination of the Pastor of Church G, was the understanding that emergent leadership was the real style of leadership permissible, and a pressure group had formed which had come from a Brethren background, and though overtly accepted Baptist policy, covertly still clung to this belief. They were strong leaders, and after canvassing among their numbers in the Church, and electing sympathisers onto the leadership of the Church, they forced the Pastor to resign. A short while later they left the Church "en masse".

4.1.2.1 Subterranean Pastors and Church Finances

Another issue that came from the research, especially among the smaller churches interviewed, was the Church's use of finance. Finance was definitely an issue that had led to the resignation of three of the Pastors that were terminated. I certainly found abuse of the financial

situation in the matter of forced termination. In Church C there were allegations of the misappropriation of funds by the terminated Pastor, who for a short time had control of the Church's financial statements.

4.1.2.2 Subterranean Pastors and Issues of Conflict in the Congregation

In Churches D, A, B and H, an interesting social phenomenon occurred relating to subterranean Pastors, namely the formation of a "pressure group" under their control. Sometimes this groups identity was problem focussed, e.g. the Sunday services in Church D were perceived to be too long. The subterranean Pastor was told by a number of different people, and he was the one who had to confront the Pastor on the matter. In another Church, outside the population of this study, the subterranean Pastor was seen to be the "hatchet man". His job was to sort out difficult situations and people, asking them to leave the Church, or disciplining them. By virtue of this, the subterranean Pastor was a person of great power. It was only when issues where strong will, or power was needed that the person would be consulted.

4.1.2.3 Subterranean Pastors and Power

In Church C a practical illustration of what Van der Ven (1996:296) calls "naked power" could be seen. The terminated Pastor exerted influence without the respect of the leadership. Allegations of financial mismanagement were made against the Pastor, but the people failed to take him to task because of fear for his position as the Pastor of the congregation. This caused the Church to slowly disintegrate under the period of his tenure. Comments like "he was manipulative and shrewd", "a very clever man", "he would pull the wool over people's eyes" (F.2.14).

Subterranean Pastors have power because they are emergent leaders in the congregation. Over a period of time they prove their ability to lead, make wise decision, to endure hardships, or by virtue of their financial standing in the community, or some special skill they possess, or some group of people that perceives them to be their leader or spokesperson, gain the position of leader. In Church G, the subterranean Pastor, felt it was his duty to comment on the quality and content of every sermon the Pastor preached, and at the end of most Church services (B.2.8), the Pastor would be criticised for his sermon in some way by the subterranean Pastor, either verbally or in writing.

4.1.3 ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTONOMY

In the interview with Church A, the leadership felt that the Pastor was hesitant to share his feelings with them (A.3.12). As the situation deteriorated in the Church, and conflict that had remained

under the surface for some time began to come out into the open. The subterranean Pastor precipitated the crisis by phoning the General Secretary of the denomination for advice and received some support from the area-co-ordinator. Unfortunately the Pastor never took any steps to ask for help. The result was that when he resigned, he received less support from the denomination than the Church actually did. Similarly, there was little accountability in Church G. The focus group interview highlighted that the problem was relationships, especially concerning the Pastor's spouse (G.2.8), and despite efforts at discipline, problems continued because of no accountability on her part. Similarly to the situation in Church A, the Pastor failed to have accountability to the denomination, but the group who were unhappy went and asked officials from the denomination "with the express purpose" to come and get rid of the Pastor (G.6.3). By calling in the denomination for help it would seem as if this group understood something of accountability, but this was not the case, as this group was not prepared to accept any authority (G.8.1). The only thing they wanted was to get rid of the Pastor. Efforts at reconciling the two groups failed.

Church G felt strongly that the problem they had experienced was exacerbated because of a lack of understanding about autonomy and accountability. In their effort to terminate the Pastor, they nominated people for the Church leadership who felt the same way as they did about him (G.4.1), in order to put more pressure on the Pastor. This relates to the concept of autonomy, in the sense that a Church can take nearly any course of action in its internal policy without fear of being held accountable for their actions. They know that, once trained, Pastors cannot go back and find support when they have problems. If they have difficulty, it was their perception that they are to sort it out among themselves. The Pastor of Church G tried to hold the members in the pressure group accountable to their constitution (G.4.8) but they violated that. In my opinion, any violation of a Church's constitution that can be clearly proved is reason for censure by the denomination, but this was not done. The focus group in Church G also stated that the people of the Church were unwilling to accept any outside advice (G.8.1). They had one thing in mind and it was to get rid of the Pastor. The denomination was used as a means to accomplish this end and not in the sense of submission to outside authority.

In a similar vein, Church F stated that there was no control or supervision of Pastors who were experiencing burnout and stress (F.2.1). They expressed a strong feeling that Pastors should be accountable to their Churches for having some free time and taking it easy, so that they are able to continue in good health in the Pastoral ministry.

Accountability was perceived to be a problem in Church's relationships with the Baptist Union in the calling of the Pastor that had eventually terminated. Church C felt that the Baptist Union had not been "up front" with them (C.3.6) in telling them that this Pastor had caused some trouble in

previous Churches. They felt that the Pastor's previous track record should have been clearly detailed for them before they called him. Church F, too was in a position that only after 8 months of the Pastor's ministry the leadership were told that the Pastor might have potential problems that they should watch out for.

Accountability is strengthened by good relationships, openness and trust. Church D felt that the Pastor should have confided in them that he was thinking of leaving before the time, but "he was never open to any discussion" (D.3.6). In 6 of the situations, there was little accountability between the Pastor and the leadership of the Church, and even less between these Pastors and the denominational leadership structures.

4.2 THE VALIDITY OF THE ANALYSIS

Mason (1996:145), says that an analysis of the research should be seen to be reasonable and based on well-founded assumptions. I sought a consistency in using the interview guide in the research, although the questions were not always asked in the same sequence at each interview, the major areas were covered. The Churches that were selected cover all aspects of the Baptist population, both larger and smaller Churches, single Pastor and multi-staffed churches. Some were suburban Churches, and some were city Churches. All of these Churches had one thing in common, in that the Pastor left the ministry for secular employment. The data generation method of focus group interviews was a reliable and convenient means of data generation, as it enabled interested parties to meet together to discuss the problem. Also it was a means of checking the veracity of the information. The research covers the research problem of the impact on the Church and the sub-problems of accountability and autonomy sufficiently.

There is no comparative study on this subject in South Africa, to which I can compare my findings, so in a sense this research is exploratory. The implications for praxis can be drawn from the findings of the research.

4.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE DATA

A practical theologian is a reflective practitioner, and as I have reflected on the results of the research I believe Baptists have flawed practices regarding the hasty imprimatur they put on a candidate for pastoral ministry. Much more stringent application and sifting processes need to be implemented by the Colleges, during the training of a candidate, and by the denomination, during the "interview phase" by the ministry board.

Coupled with this a more thorough and applicable "accountability stage" (the time between completing theological education and acceptance onto the fully accredited list of Baptist Pastors), needs to be implemented before a person's name is placed on that list.

Rev Victor Brandt, a former lecturer in practical theology at the Baptist Theological College felt that the lists, published by the Baptist Union, should solely reflect the names of men and women who enjoy the status of a "fully accredited minister" in active service as a Pastor of a Baptist Church within the Union, and perhaps there is an advantage to this suggestion, as accreditation to pastoral ministry is actually admission to a specific group of people, in this case Pastors. I argue that Pastors have too little say in who is accepted into that group by the Baptist Union.

During an interview with a denominational employee, the interviewee stated that there are some people who shouldn't be in the ministry in the first place. Upon further investigation, the interviewee clarified this statement (M.1.5) by stating that there are certain things that disqualify a person for pastoral ministry:

- a. A lack of basic personal maturity
- b. A lack of relational skills
- c. A lack of a genuine sense of call
- d. Idealised conceptions of what the ministry is like
- e. The perception that the pastoral ministry is a career
- f. Lack of a suitable "gift-mix"

Interestingly, during another interview with a denominational employee, (R.1.3) the same conclusion was reached by the interviewee, namely that there are two types of men that leave the ministry

- a. Men that need to leave the ministry
- b. Others that are forced to do so.

Again the issue of "gift-mix" and personality type was mentioned. There are many men and women suited for ministry, but not for pastoral ministry. In other words, with the broadening of scope for service in Baptist ministry in South Africa to include the youth, the mission field, para-Church organisations, and other avenues of Christian service, people who feel "called" to service need not be pressured into only one avenue, namely the pastoral ministry, they can train more specifically for the area of ministry suited to their particular type of giftedness.

It is my contention that as early as possible in the training of a person for pastoral ministry, evaluation procedures are put in place, so that stricter criteria for inclusion on the denominational roll are introduced.

Of course many local Churches will call a Pastor anyway, irrespective of whether his name is on any list, and even contravene their own constitution, as we have a case of which I am aware at present.

Those in authority, whose task it is to accredit Pastors for ministry in the Baptist Union must understand that accreditation by them is not for a specific "job", but rather into a "group". And it is from this group that the Churches should make their appointments.

It is therefore this group that must have more input as to who join their ranks, and not leave this merely as a voting procedure at the annual assembly. The Baptist Union is therefore not merely accountable to the Churches for their actions, but also to the Pastors of these Churches, for whom they include into that body.

Cramb (1996:17), surveyed the members of the ministerial committee in Queensland, Australia, in order to ascertain the strengths of their current practices of accrediting Pastors, the committee pointed to 8 reasons for deferring/rejecting applicants from 1991 to present:

- a. Lack of a clear sense of call
- b. Lacking suitable gifting for pastoring
- c. Problems with authority
- d. Lack of maturity
- e. Personality irregularities
- f. Sexual and immoral impropriety
- g. Unsuitable for leadership role
- h. Failure to respond to ministerial committee suggestions regarding changes to be made by the candidate.

This seems almost to be an exegesis of the situation here in South Africa, reflected in the list on the previous page. The place and time for changes in focus or altering one's plans I believe is in the "preparation for ministry" stage of a Pastor's life. Coupled with this much more work needs to be done in South Africa in the same vein as Cramb's work in Australia on accreditation and functioning of the denomination in crises.

Pastoral termination will continue its trend, and probably increase due to a number of factors:

- a. The present climate of violence in South Africa and the associated "brain drain"
- b. The impact of the Internet, with vacancies for Pastoral Positions being advertised from all over the world, especially the USA. A brief "surf" of the "Willowcreek" site found dozens of situations vacant in both large and small churches, for almost any sort of full-time position in the local church.
- c. The generally high standard of preaching and theological education puts South African Baptist Pastors in the "sought after" category among overseas churches.

I have begun to "network" with other Baptists around the world who are interested in pastoral termination. And, except for the Southern Baptist Convention, with programmes at associational and national level, as I have mentioned earlier, it is mostly a solo effort on the part of someone in that denomination who is either doing the work out of a personal burden, or for academic purposes.

4.3.1 A REFLEXIVE READING OF THE DATA

Mason (1996:109), points to a reflexive reading of the data as one of the options open to a qualitative researcher, in the process of sorting, organising and indexing the data. In this exercise the researcher seeks to examine their link to data generation and interpretation. I do not find this incongruous with Eisner's artistic approach, which allows the researcher more personal input into the research and locates him/her as part of the research process.

Because of the nature of the problem of pastoral termination, and the fact that I am a fully accredited Pastor within the Baptist denomination, those being interviewed on 5 of the occasions asked for my personal comments and feelings "off the record" after the interview took place about their particular situation. In Churches C, D and E through the interviews it was my perception that there was a need for a great deal of encouragement, and during the course of the interviews I attempted to become involved in this process.

In Church C (C.2.1) I said, "In my days as a young Christian, people spoke very highly of this Church, and the wonderful ministry Pastors had here". I also spoke of my own experiences in this matter of pastoral termination, to assure them they were not alone in this problem (C.7.3). In interview D, the group expressed their unhappiness over the responses to their attempt to call a new Pastor, 5 years after the previous one was terminated. In this scenario, I was able to share with them of my experience of receiving "calls" from churches, and how I had felt being on the receiving end of the call. (D.3.4). The group in the interview with Church D felt that previous Pastors had spoken out of turn about their Church at assembly and elsewhere (D.7.5) and hence there was a hesitancy on the part of Pastors to consider a call to this Church, as they felt that the water had been poisoned.

It is my observation, which has been supported from empirical research that there are a good number of men and women eager to receive a call from a Church to be their Pastor. Some of these are young graduating students from seminaries, who have not received an invitation from a Church, or who have not passed the ministry board interviews. There are also older men and women, who have given up their careers later in life, with a sense that they have been called by God to pastoral service. My contention is that such people are more anxious about entering the pastorate, and are more willing to accept the call to a Church that might have suffered from pastoral termination, or have a history of such. Knowing the background of the problems in Church A, the current Pastor was glad to be in Baptist pastoral ministry there, even though the same problems still existed.

4.4 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS FOR CHURCH PRAXIS

The impact of pastoral termination upon local Churches is of such a serious nature that it demands attention. The findings of the research demonstrated that Churches only call in help when the situation is seen to be beyond redemption, and misunderstanding of the principle of autonomy of the local Church exists in the minds of many Pastors and lay people alike. More stringent accreditation procedures should be followed. Accountability could be strengthened through fellowship even at a social level.

Training Colleges could be more focussed on quality not quantity in terms of students they pass that they see are eligible for accreditation into pastoral ministry. It is one thing to be under economic pressure in the Colleges to accept students for studies, but there is no economic pressure to accept them into Pastoral ministry once they have completed the course and earned their academic qualification.

All the Churches interviewed failed to see the relationship between their situation and their identity as "the Baptist people of God". They had stopped looking at their community as their "mission field", but were more concerned about "who knew about their problem", and "how to contain the damage", a distant third was, "how do we get on from here". It was almost as if a massive "short circuit" had derailed their programme and the processes that would shape their life.

Croucher (1997:1) approaches the issue of forced termination from the affect it has on the Pastor and his family. It had an interesting connection with the interview with Church A.

In the course of the discussion it was mentioned that the terminated Pastor had spent too much time with his family, even coaching sport at the school, instead of with the Church. Croucher,

(1997:1) too states that a regular response in his questionnaire was that the Pastors felt the need to spend more time with the family.

My interpretation of the situation from the point of view of Church A was that they had a very selfish attitude towards their Pastor, coupled with unrealistic expectations, and this was compounded by the fact that the Church was situated in a "blue collar" area, and the Pastor was reasonably successful in the business sector as a bi-vocational Pastor. He was perceived to be doing better financially, and in terms of bringing up his family than the rest of the members.

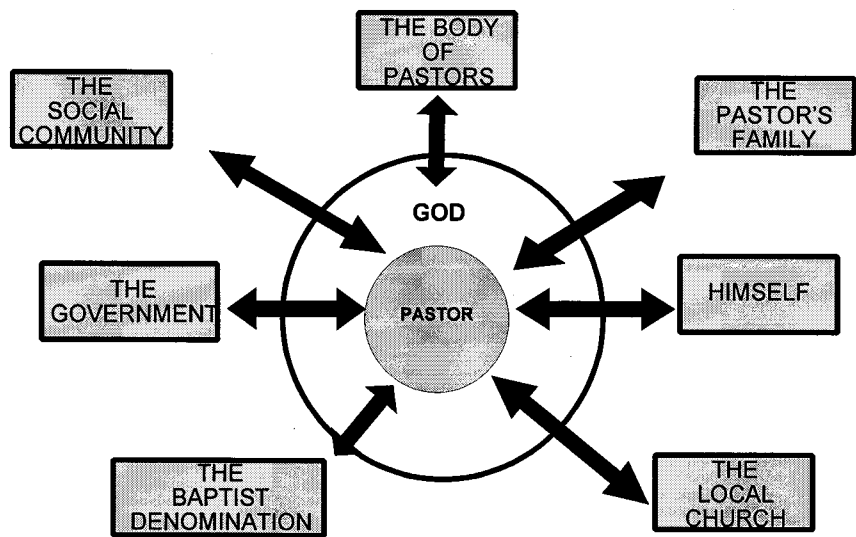
The implication of the research for Baptist praxis is that more contact between the local Church and the denominational leadership could be made in some form. At least once a year, someone from the denomination could be invited to attend a Church's council meeting, to keep contact with the members of a local Church. Area co-ordinators should be less involved in committees and more involved in the lives of the Pastors and the Churches.

It should be stated at the beginning of a Pastor's ministry that the Baptists believe in both the autonomy of the local Church and accountability. This accountability primarily is toward God, but also to the Church, to the denomination, and towards the other Pastors in the denomination, as I will attempt to illustrate with diagram 3.

A number of Churches (A and B in particular) felt that young men fresh out of Colleges should be engaged in a more formal internship before assuming full responsibility for Pastoral work. This internship should be done under senior Pastors who have both godliness and pastoral experience.

Accountability is not, I believe, a contradiction of the historical principle of the autonomy of the local church. It should be addressed by individual Pastors, Churches and the denomination as a whole. The following diagram demonstrates the matter of accountability from the focus of this research, namely the Baptist Pastor.

DIAGRAM 3: ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF A PASTOR



The Pastor is always primarily accountable to God for every aspect of his life. However in practice this means that as God’s will and purpose is revealed in Scripture, the Pastor is therefore accountable to those principles of life and ministry as he interprets them from Scripture.

All other accountability is filtered through this understanding of the will of God as laid out in the Scriptures.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis has touched upon the role and function of a Pastor, especially highlighting his position as a “parable of Jesus”. But it has also demonstrated the need for accountability in his life and ministry as a member of the family of God. This in no way has sought to denigrate the autonomy that the local Church of which such a Pastor might lead, but merely to point out that the issues of autonomy and accountability in his life as well as the life of the Church ought to be held in tension.

The thesis also explores the issues of autonomy and accountability from the point of view of the local Church, and it could be argued that there is too little interdependence among Churches as they seek to co-operate at a local level.

No doubt exists in my mind that Churches have become imbalanced through the termination

of their Pastors from ministry to enter secular employment. They have lost their vision, their focus and their joy in being the Baptist people of God.

It is my hope that this empirical study will be added to work that is being carried out mostly by individuals across the world, and that the result of an attempt to network this research with other findings will result in a better understanding of how to deal with the problem of the exodus of Baptist Pastors.

APPENDIX 1

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Only in one of the focus group interviews was alleged sexual misconduct the reason for pastoral termination, however, parallel research has indicated an increase in the occurrence of this behaviour as a reason for termination, I wish to include a short chapter on the subject as it relates to accountability, even though it was not covered in my research.

Often, because of misguided zeal, Churches fall into the mistake of two extremes in attempting to deal with the issue of sexual misconduct on behalf of the Pastor:

- a. Total condemnation of the person
- b. Easy forgiveness

The problem is further complicated by virtue of definition, and any attempt to understand the matter must attempt to include all facets of sexual misconduct, for example:

- a. Fornication (in the case of an unmarried Pastor, or before marriage)
- b. Sexual misconduct which is privately confessed and dealt with
- c. The spouse of a Pastor who has an affair
- d. A homosexual relationship
- e. Inappropriate sexual behaviour
- f. The possible difference between a "one night stand" and an ongoing affair

This dissertation is concerned with relating such issues to the matter of accountability, and Fortune (1992, quoted in Cramb, 1996:133), has identified 7 ingredients in the process of restoration where sexual conduct is concerned:

- a. Truth telling
- b. Acknowledging the violation
- c. Compassion
- d. Protecting the vulnerable
- e. Accountability
- f. Restitution
- g. Vindication

Accountability in this matter involves educating Pastors both before and during ministry that

there are degrees of intimate behaviour (Morris, 1971, quoted in Cramb, 1996:126). But I wonder how much consideration has gone into cultural differences even among white people in South Africa. For example, in Gauteng, a common form of greeting among young people would be just a friendly hello, or a handshake, but in KwaZulu it is much more physical, with a warm embrace, which signifies just a simple "hello".

Morris (1971, quoted in Cramb, 1996:126), lists 12 stages of intimate behaviour. They are:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| a. Eye to body | g. Mouth to mouth |
| b. Eye to eye | h. Hand to head |
| c. Voice to voice | i. Hand to body |
| d. Hand to hand | j. Mouth to breast |
| e. Arm to shoulder | k. Hand to genitals |
| f. Arm to waist | l. Genital to genitals |

It is becoming more and more necessary to establish the exact nature of an offence under the new constitution of South Africa, and any charge of sexual misconduct may open the Church or for that matter the denomination to serious cases of libel. Plus, there are some sexual activities that have, through judicial means become legitimised, which are biblically unacceptable and cause for discipline.

Discussions with denominational executive members have highlighted this by saying that a Pastor has almost to be caught "*in corpus delicti*" before any action can be taken by the denomination.

A final word on the Pastor himself in this matter. Without touching on the morality of the matter at all, I think that sexual misconduct is committed by two types of people, sexual offenders and sexual abusers, and there is a clear line of difference between the two.

A sexual offender is someone who, for some reason has crossed the line of impropriety. I believe that this behaviour is out of character with the person and the prognosis for restoration is good. However, there are those who are sexual abusers, who deliberately cross the boundaries of right and wrong, knowing that they are doing so. They are sociopathic (lacking clear conscience) in the matter.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE USED IN THE RESEARCH

Opening statement: My research covers the topic "Men who are leaving the Baptist Ministry"

QUESTIONS

- Question 1:** What do you as the Leaders and representatives of the Church feel about this matter?
- Question 2:** Do you think that this is a problem that needs addressing by the denomination?
(At what point should it be addressed? i.e. pre-training, training, post training)
- Question 3:** Did you as leaders in the Church realise at some point there was a problem that might lead to the resignation of the Pastor?
- Question 4:** What, in your opinion were the factors, generally speaking that lead to his leaving?
- Question 5:** At what point did you contact the Baptist Union or Confidential Consultant or General Secretary or Area Co-ordinator to discuss the matter with him?
- Question 6:** Did you feel that they were able to help?
- Question 7:** Do you think that the Church suffered as result of this traumatic experience? How?
- Question 8:** All things considered, if this situation were to happen again, what would you do differently in trying to handle the problem?
- Question 9:** In your search for a new Pastor, did you get many applications for the position?
(Was there resistance to coming to your church?)
- Question 10:** If you could address the BU Executive after your experience, what would you say to them?
- Question 11:** If you could address all the Pastors of the BU, and try to help them, as a result of your experience, what would you say?

Thank you for helping me in my research.

Steven B Pierce

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